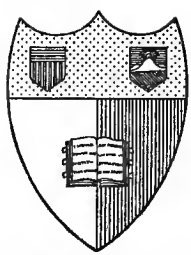
THE CHINESE

PAINTED BY THEMSELVES

BY

COLONEL TCHENG-KI-TONG



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COLONEL TCHENG-KI-TONG,

MILITARY ATTACHÉ OF CHINA AT PARIS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

JAMES MILLINGTON.

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CONTENTS.

The Chinese Painted by Themselves.

INTRODUCTION.

A TEN years' sojourn in Europe, has led me to believe that of all countries on the globe China is the least known. This certainly does not arise from lack of curiosity.

Everything coming from China seems to possess a particular attraction. A trifle—a little cup of transparent porcelain—even a fan, are looked upon as precious objects. They are Chinese!

To judge from the astonishment excited, one might imagine we were a kind of trained animals in a menagerie performing curious antics, like human beings. They would like to put us in the magic lantern; and we can perfectly realize the truthful description with which the exhibition would be accompanied. Between the little *Chinois* floating in syrup like prunes, and the big *Chinois* figuring upon folding-screens, there is space enough for our four hundred millions! Little more is known concerning our land of China.

It is needless to dwell upon the amazement I felt as I became more and more familiar with Western ideas. Not only the questions put to me displayed the most ludicrous ignorance, but even books pretending to describe China related the greatest absurdities.

If they were satisfied with saying we were accustomed to eat dogs, and to give our guests serpents' eggs and roast lizards, there would be no great harm done. Nor should I complain much if we were described as polygamists—there are so many of them; or that we give our babies—our dear little babies—as food to animals whose names I forget. There are fallacies of such a nature that it is useless to be offended at them; merely to mention the truth is sufficient to explode them.

In everything there is the probable and the improbable; and we must make a distinction between childishness and serious matters—between error and prejudice.

I was not long in discovering that the source of error was prejudice; and I made the resolution to publish, so soon as I felt equal to the task, my personal impressions on the subject of China, imagining that perhaps my nationality of Chinaman might not be less advantageous for that purpose than the profession of traveller.

Nothing is more imperfect than a notebook of travels: the first fool one meets gives a physiognomy

to the whole nation whose customs are to be described. The recorded conversation with an outcast may perhaps be considered a valuable document by a traveller. A discontented or spiteful person may interpret his own rancour, and discredit his class. All the notes will be tainted with fatal error; nothing will be exactly true.

It is really simplicity on my part to argue the point. Do the Western nations know each other? Are there not unknown regions and unexplored provinces even in the same country? Are not manners as different as characters, and for certain details is there not a point at which questions are asked in vain? Manners represent the sum-total of past history—they are the slow work of all the ages that have come and gone in the district under observation; and to understand them you should be acquainted with their endless series of traditions, otherwise you go to work hap-hazard, like an organ-grinder, and your narrative is worthless.

The fact is, that the book is often written before the travels are undertaken, for the simple reason that the aim of the journey is the book to be published. The object is to obtain three hundred pages of print; what does it matter about the truth? On the contrary, if the book is to sell, it must be spiced with the singular, the horrible, social evils, scandals, or disgusting details.

But to depict the simple existence at the family

hearth; to study a language in order to meditate upon its traditions; to live a people's daily life—Mandarin with the Mandarins, man of letters with the literary class, workman with the workmen—in a word, Chinese with the Chinese—for the sake of a mere book, that would be far too much trouble!

But are not these really the conditions to be fulfilled if we expect to give any information of the slightest value? Is it no longer necessary to learn in order to know?

But the proposition is too evident. To insist is waste of ink. The traveller who meets a giant, writes in his notebook: 'The denizens of these distant regions are lofty in stature.' If, on the contrary, he should first see a dwarf, he writes: 'In this country one sees only dwarfs; it is like the land described by Gulliver.' The same holds good of manners as of facts. If a case of infanticide is observed, out with the notebook! 'These people are barbarians!' If a Mandarin has done something derogatory, notebook again! 'The Mandarinate is utterly perverted!' And this is the easy method in which history is written. Truly, as the proverb says, 'Travellers tell strange tales.'

I am of opinion that civilized nations ought to institute an academy whose mission should be to inspect books of travels and generally every publication purporting to describe the manners, principles of government, or laws of a country. It should not be

legal to distort the truth by way of speculation; or at least, since all rights are facultative, there should be an index pointing out this book as untrustworthy, and that as dependable. Editorial honesty would in this manner be encouraged, because efforts to speak the truth would be recognised, esteemed, and compensated. Why should not a sanitary cordon against slander be established?

I propose in this book to represent China as it is —to depict Chinese manners and customs by means of my actual acquaintance with them, but in a European spirit and style. I desire to place my native experience at the service of my acquired experience; in a word, I think as a European would who had learned all that I know concerning China, and who wished to draw those parallels and contrasts between Occidental and extreme Oriental civilizations which his studies might justify.

If I pass in review the subjects of education and family life, it will be perceived that I am not ignorant of their organization in Europe. My reader will accompany me; he will go where I go; be presented to my friends, and share our pleasures. I will open our books to him; he shall know our language, and learn our customs. Then we will journey to the provinces together. On the way we will gossip in French, English, or German; we will discuss his own country, and those who await his return. We will while away our evenings in turning over the

poets, and he will feel his emotions stirred in listening to the harmony of our verses, joined to their depth of sentiment.

He will then form a better idea of our civilization, and find pleasure in the loftiness and justice pervading it. If he should find something to criticize, he will remember that nothing is perfect in this world, and that we must always hope for future improvement.

Perhaps he will venture to reveal in all sincerity his opinions, when I have opened wide my hospitable gates! But I shall be satisfied if I am not repaid solely with disdain.

Here and there will be found criticisms upon the manners and customs of the West. It must not be forgotten that I use a steel pen, and not a China-ink brush, and have learned to think and write in the European manner.

Criticism is in fact the salt of discourse; we cannot always be admiring, and now and then one is tempted to think like the peasant who was angry with Aristides because he was tired of hearing him continually styled 'the Just.'

Unvarying praise becomes commonplace and tedious; qualifications I have endeavoured to avoid.

Let my reader, then, kindly remember these criticisms have no other pretension than to give more variety to my composition, and excuse the im-

perfections of a style which has no other ambition than to be clear.

I have tried to instruct and to amuse, and if I am sometimes led away by the subject to the extent of declaring my affection for my native land, I ask pardon beforehand of all who love their own.

CHINESE FAMILY LIFE.

THE family is the institution upon which is based the whole social and political edifice of China.

Chinese society may be defined as an aggregation of families.

From the most remote period the influence of the family has predominated in every order of idea; and we say, quoting Confucius, that to govern a country, one must first have learned to govern a family.

The family is essentially a government in miniature; it is the school in which governors are formed, and the sovereign himself is a disciple of it.

The difference between East and West is so characteristic in the family point of view, that I imagine it will interest the reader to get first a general idea of that institution, without prejudice to a more detailed description by-and-by. I will therefore sketch the salient outlines with a free hand, reserving the minutiæ for a later period.

The Chinese family may be likened to a co-operative society. All its members are under the obligation to live in community, and to render mutual assistance. History mentions an ancient minister named Tchang, who united under his roof all the members of his family proceeding from nine generations. This example is cited as a model we should all endeavour to imitate.

Thus constituted, the family is a kind of religious order, subject to fixed rules. All its resources are united in a single fund, and all contributions are made without distinction of more or less. The family is subject to the regime of 'equality' and 'fraternity'—great words, which in China are written in the heart, and not, as elsewhere, upon the walls.

Every member of the family has to conduct himself in such a manner as to maintain harmony. This is a duty. But perfection is nowhere to be found; and if we imagine an ideal, we know by experience that every rule has its exceptions, just as there are spots upon the sun.

If by fortuitous circumstances this tranquillity is disturbed—if order is not maintained in the family—the law authorizes the division of the common property: a division which is made equally among all the males. I will explain later why the women do not participate.

This organization has incontestable advantages from the point of view of mutual assistance. If a

member of the family falls ill, he immediately receives all the aid he requires; if another is unable by his labour to obtain the necessaries of life, the family forthwith intervenes, either to repair the injustice of fortune, or to ameliorate the woes and privations of old age.

As may be seen, it is the institution of the patriarchal system, as it flourished formerly in Biblical times.

The chief authority is vested in the most aged member of the family, and in all the important conjunctures of life reference is made to his decision. He has the attributes of the head of a government; all documents are signed by him in the name of the family.

The traveller passing through our country can easily verify the truth of these statements. Let him ask to whom belongs such and such an estate, and he will be told to such and such a family. If he wishes to ascertain the fact with greater exactness, he may read upon the posts marking the limits of the property the name of the family it belongs to.

In our families some matters are much the same during life, as they are in the West after death. In the cemeteries outside the gates of European towns may be seen tombs, upon which are inscribed 'Family vaults.' There brothers are reunited who have scarcely ever seen each other, and relations sleep side by side who have never felt mutual affection in life. They are reconciled in death, and their parts

are equal. As for us Chinese, we inaugurate during this life the work that only death achieves without opposition elsewhere.

Every family has its particular statutes regulating its customs; they are a sort of written law. All the properties the family possesses are inscribed upon these statutes, together with the purpose to which they are devoted. Thus, the produce of such an estate is destined to pension the aged, and of such another to furnish the prizes given to young people after their examinations. The resources to provide education for the children, those which furnish donations to girls who marry; in a word, all the expenses which correspond to foreseen requirements are inscribed upon the budget.

The statutes not only determine the conditions of material life, they define also its duties; and one of the articles regulates the punishment to be inflicted upon any member of the family who by criminal conduct or dissipation may gravely compromise the family honour.

Doubtless it would be incomprehensible how these customs could be maintained, if education were not specially directed to inculcate respect for them. Our system of education is exactly adapted to the end desired; namely, to inspire above all things family affection. Without that precaution the family would probably be as much divided in the East as it is in the West, where all must admit it no longer exists

as a social force, and where it has no other advantage but to create relations whose utility is manifested by the windfall of unexpected inheritances—the only things which seem to arouse the dormant family spirit.

There are five general principles which by education form and maintain the family tie. These are: fidelity to the sovereign, respect towards parents, concord between the married, harmony between brothers, and constancy in friendship.

These principles are the very essence of our education, and tend to fix in the mind the convictions requisite to ensure family affection, and to maintain the antique organization, in spite of those incompatibilities of temper which usually serve as excuse to the least excusable disorders.

The family in which we are born is founded upon forty centuries of harmony, and every succeeding generation increases its authority. None, therefore, need be astonished if the family spirit is so powerful in China, and if the first article of our faith is fidelity towards the sovereign. The sovereign is, in fact, the keystone of the social edifice; he is the head of all the families—the patriarch to whom the devotion of all is due. To serve the sovereign is to serve the great master of the universal family, and to honour one's own family. This explains why the most powerful motive of ambition is a desire to belong to the administration of the State.

Respect towards parents, or filial love, is a sentiment which displays itself in every clime. It exists in man's heart; it is a natural sentiment. In China filial respect is very great, and it has its peculiarity in the fact that parents benefit by all the services rendered by their children. Thus not only children owe respect and gratitude to their parents, but even strangers who receive benefits render gratitude to the parents of those from whom they receive them. If a State functionary is ennobled, his parents become noble at the same time. The promotion has a retrospective effect; and in proportion as the dignity of the rank is raised, in such degree is it exalted in the ancestral family.

This custom is characteristic, and marks a profound discrepancy between Oriental and Occidental manners. Nobility does not consist solely in the honorific title awarded by a sovereign. We distinguish two kinds of nobility: one is hereditary, and descends to the eldest son, as in England; the other attaches to the rank of a State office. Hereditary nobility is only conferred in rare instances; it is given to honour and immortalize eminent services—warlike valour, for example.

The nobility attaching to the rank of an official position in the Government is a sort of life peerage: it is not transmitted to children, but to ancestors. If a functionary is promoted, his parents receive a dignity equal to his own; they are really ennobled,

if I may so express it, by right of authorship, in order that they may receive the tribute of filial piety. But the children of the functionary, whatever the elevation of his rank, have no right to any privilege whatever.

The Chinese aristocracy is thus composed both of those whose official rank constitutes a nobility, and of those who obtain it by inheritance. The latter, when their rank is not combined with personal merit, are without influence in the Empire of the Centre.

I have mentioned concord between the married as a principle of the programme of education; and, indeed, it is a principle whose excellence can scarcely be over-estimated, since in China marriage is indissoluble. Not that this is to be understood in a legal sense (it is known that in certain cases Chinese law authorizes the dissolution of marriage), but in the sense of respect due to the family, and more especially to the parents.

The indissolubility of marriage depends upon a precise cause, proceeding from the circumstances themselves under which it is contracted. In China we marry at an early age, and it is the parents who themselves choose for their son a suitable wife. In Europe there is nothing similar: the young people take upon themselves to decide whether it suits them to marry, and if it is time to finish with a bachelor existence. There are many motives to which the

best marriageable years are sacrificed—those years which are the happiest for the wife. Among us the manners and customs of the good old times are still in force. It is the parents who give their children in marriage; and they truly believe that their experience is not altogether useless in the choice of wives for their sons.

Marriage is in China considered purely as a family institution—its sole aim is the enlargement of the family; and a family is only prosperous and happy so long as it is becoming more numerous. It is, therefore, quite logical that the husband and wife should, for the sake of the principle of filial love, respect a union desired by their parents.

I have mentioned 'fraternity' also. This is not an empty word. Words always mean something in China, and that of fraternity, especially among brothers, has a real significance. Fraternity is a sentiment which has its origin in the family, and draws its strength from that institution. It is therefore not surprising that in Western societies where the family is disintegrated fraternity should have lost its character. There has arisen in its place a kind of feeling resembling resignation—not Christian, I think—which, assisted by habit, has the effect of creating a *modus vivendi* among brothers. Our manners are altogether different.

Friendship also constitutes one of our most precious duties; it is not a vain sentiment. Friends

are friends in China; and to use the same expression as La Fontaine, I may say that '*ni le nom ni la chose ne sont rares.*' We have even an ancient versified form which was formerly sung, and which defines in a simple manner the duties of friendship. This is the literal translation:

'By Heaven and Earth,
In presence of the Moon and Sun,
By their father and their mother,
A and B have sworn unswerving friendship.

'And now if A, riding in a chariot,
Meets B, wearing a shabby hat,
A will alight from his chariot
To pay respect to B.

'If another day B, riding a fine horse,
Meets A carrying a pedlar's pack,
He will dismount from his steed
As A dismounted from his car.'

This is plainly a practical kind of friendship, going further than the purse—that cape rounded so unwillingly by European friendship, as if that virtue were but a kind of ornament.

Examples of friendly devotion are numerous in our national history. For example, a man takes off his vestment to clothe a friend fallen into poverty whom he meets on the road. This example is frequent enough not to be quoted as a rarity. I have remarked that generally in Christian countries absolutely commonplace anecdotes of benevolence are held up to public admiration. The exercise of

the virtues is presented as a marvel. Is this from excess of humility, or is it simply a confession of weakness? I am inclined to adopt the latter theory.

To my mind the word 'charity' is the bane of many human sentiments. The pretension to please God and His saints—that is to say, everybody—is an excuse for the neglect of the most obvious duties. Indiscriminate charity is a method of doing good certainly, but as it is a divine method, men can only practise it after the fashion of imitators. There appears to be a certain secret in the proceeding that cannot be learned. I have somewhere read the saying: 'He who tries to play the angel plays the fool.' I think similarly that he who tries to counterfeit God does not come up to the angel. We in China have no ambition of this kind, and are all the better for it.

Not only do the rich assist their unfortunate friends, but the poor also come to the aid of those poorer than themselves. If you belong to the literary class, all your literary friends subscribe to help you. If you are a labourer, your comrades act in the same way. It is a custom among people of the same class. There are even subscriptions among friends to contribute towards the marriage of one of their circle. Other subscriptions are raised to assist a friend's widow, or to educate his children. The human being is not isolated.

What strikes me most in the manners of the Western world is the indifference of the human heart. The misfortune of others has no attraction; on the contrary, it has been written that there is something pleasant in it. The fact is not praiseworthy; it is not that compassion and intelligence are deficient, the simple reason is that people are not practical.

Alfred de Musset, the favourite poet of many, wrote these lines:

> 'He who has never in the feverish night
> Started from sleep, and prayed in causeless fright
> Barefoot, with burning tears and trembling hands
> Before the infinite Power that all commands,
> His heart with pity racked for unknown woes,
> * * * * * *,

For unknown woes! That is an ideal with a vengeance! Pity for unknown woes probably replaces what should be bestowed upon woes that are known but too much. I have never read anything equal to this. Either it is ultra-pathetic or else it is a parody of compassion unworthy of a gentleman. But in poetry everything is excusable, even nonsense. It is a license! The finest verses, however, cut a sorry figure beside the simple truth. Observe a sunbeam thrown upon the gaudy decorations of a theatre!

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY.

RELIGIONS have existed from all time. Primitively they constituted the mysterious bond uniting the creature to the Creator, and their symbols represented adoration and gratitude. Under those so divergent forms expressing the sympathy of the human soul with the universal Spirit, we always find the idea of the supernatural joined to the most curious practices. In his soaring towards God, man's imperfect nature causes frequent falls. But the initiatory flight is the highest. Religions are less complicated as we ascend the stream of Time ; they seem to simplify themselves and tend towards that unity which is our ideal of harmony and beauty. It seems as if at first they must have been worthy of the Deity. But that condition diminishes as the world grows older, and at length casts only feeble rays athwart the lengthening shadows upon the pathway of humanity, as on the evening of a fine summer's day. I have felt that impression in studying our old books, and reading the admirable maxims of our sages. I have felt it also while seeking to decipher the secret of our destiny in the sacred books of the West. It appeared to me that the greatest

intensity of the glorious light had died away, and that we now received only the last pale reflections. Everywhere I see the radiance of a truth whose beauty is the same, and I seem to hear an immense choir in which all the voices of heaven and earth join harmoniously; and when, awaking from the enchantment of this dream, I listen to the tumultuous clamours of a world become a chaos of beliefs, my spirit is full of amazement, and I could doubt that truth existed, but that conscience forces me to believe in spite of myself. We have no occasion to envy the West its religious beliefs, although we do not look at them from the same standpoint. Moreover, I will not discuss the merits of religions. Man is so small seen from on high that it matters little in what manner he honours God. God understands all languages, and especially that which is expressed in silence by the movements of the spirit. We also have those who pray with the spirit, and those who pray with the lips. They have nothing in common. We have the ideal religion which compels the spirit to enter into itself, and we have the terrestrial religion expressed by movements of the arms and legs. In a word, we know what sincerity is, and what hypocrisy.

Religions are at the same level as intelligence. We have a religion of the literary class which corresponds to the degree of culture of the most enlightened body in the empire. This is the religion

of Confucius, or rather his philosophy; for his doctrine is that of the founder of a school who has enunciated moral maxims, but has not meddled with speculative theories upon the destinies of man and the nature of the divinity.

Confucius lived in the sixth century before the Christian era, and his memory is in such veneration that there is no town in China without a temple erected in his honour. His philosophical system consists essentially in the education of the human heart; and the word 'education' is truly that which best expresses the aim of his teaching. To raise from earth the inert man abased by the bad use of his faculties; to open his eyes to the azure splendour of the illimitable universe; to accustom him by degrees to put off his nullity, and to feel himself a spirit, a being, thinking, willing, and knowing. To think, will, and know are the three steps of that education which begins with awakening and ends with science, and whose text-book contains the finest maxims that ever philosopher wrote upon humanity.

We must not imagine, however, that the doctrine of Confucius is confined to maxims or to advice, without pointing out a precise method. There is a most exact method in that doctrine, and it is really a practical course of moral education. I will try to explain the plan of it.

The principle upon which the system rests is to

maintain the reason within fixed limits. Confucius said the human heart is like a galloping horse, which 'heeds neither rein nor voice;' or like a torrent descending the rapid slopes of a mountain; or like a fire breaking out. These are violent forces, which we must hope to keep within bounds, while maintaining their power without allowing them to develop.

He said that the human heart has an invariable ideal—Justice and Wisdom; and that the five senses are so many powers of seduction turning it away from that ideal. The means that Confucius advises his adepts to use is to arm themselves beforehand against the danger of these seductions, and the invincible weapon he gives them is Respect.

Respect is the general sentiment which extends to every action of life. The first cause of corruption is negligence; no quantity is so small as not to be taken into account by Reason.

Negligence puts us in the power of habit, which has been cynically called a second Nature—as if Nature were not one and the same! It is Respect extended to all the acts of life, above all the most insignificant, which turns away unhealthy influences, and gradually performs the patient work of education.

Confucius teaches us to observe that the five senses, as they are defined, constitute faculties, but not endowments. Man, however, has received en-

dowments from Nature, and he enumerates them. They are: a respectful physiognomy, soft speech, acute hearing, piercing sight, passionless reflection. These particular states of our faculties should be unremittingly developed.

The basis, therefore, of the philosophic system of Confucius is Respect, as Charity is the basis of the evangelical doctrine. Respect addresses itself to actions; Charity to individuals—or, to speak more precisely, to 'our neighbour.'

I imagine—it is a caprice of imagination—that Confucius had a glimpse of that Charity which creates a 'neighbour.' But our moralist dared not aim at such perfection; it required a divine presumption to believe in the existence of a 'neighbour.' He preferred leaving the initiative of Charity to man; and if he gives him the key to arrive at human perfection, he does not despair of humanity receiving some benefit from it.

I have no pretension to give religious lessons, still less to convert, inasmuch as Confucius leaves everyone free to worship God as he pleases. I will, however, remark that this system, which consists in raising the heart of man, in order to direct all his thoughts to God, as a sort of consequence of moral good, lacks neither grandeur nor logic. It seems right that the human being should adorn himself with all the splendours of virtue to communicate with the Divine Being; and to present adoration

as an aim is an elevated, sublime idea, which satisfies the mind and captivates the reason.

I shall perhaps be accused of embellishing the subject, and only showing the beauty of theories. My reader knows better than I that books have magnificent bindings, and are very seldom opened—that precepts do not make everybody virtuous, and that to know them, and apply them, are different operations. I have heard it said that our morality is like the dead languages that are no longer spoken—it has almost been called archæological: but I am acquainted with other moralities which have had the same destiny; and the maxims of Equality and Fraternity—I might even say of Liberty—appear to me to give more work to the speech-makers than to practical disciples. Criticism of this kind is not difficult: by turns the individuals composing the great tribe of man love to discuss the enormous motes in their neighbours' eyes, and forget the imperceptible beam in their own. These are inconsistencies which throw into all the more relief the maxims of Confucius: for with a little more respect and less negligence, life would be more dignified and more estimable.

I return to the practical maxims. Confucius has a number of small means to overcome great errors: it is like homœopathy applied to the diseases of the mind. He forbids, to cite one of these means, fixed ideas—that is, prejudice. He says all men are the

same, the ancient and the modern; and the good of the one is the same as the good of the other: they do not differ. To imitate the ancients in the wisdom of their conduct, and to endeavour to know them, are the best means to know one's self.

In a word, he tries to create a general point of view, uniting all consciences. No one will escape its magnetism; and without reserve, without the conception of another ideal, every spirit will turn towards the sun of the moral world to receive its beneficial light.

He says likewise:

'Enter the secret recesses of Nature, and study good and evil: you will be filled with the feeling of Nature herself; and in spite of the vast dimensions of the universe, and the distances separating social situations, you will conceive in your inmost soul the principle of the equality of creatures.

'If you maintain conscience, you will restrict desire, and arrive at the ideal of terrestrial life, which is tranquillity of spirit.

'Tranquillity is a kind of vigilant attention. It is when tranquillity is perfect that the human faculties display all their resources, because they are enlightened by reason and sustained by knowledge.'

But I must stop short; it is unnecessary to further develop this magnificent doctrine, which constitutes one of the most splendid tributes made by man to his Creator.

The ancient worship sanctioned by Confucius admitted neither images nor priests, but merely certain ceremonies forming the rules of a cultus. These ceremonies are but little noticed by minds occupied by the principles.

Religious unity does not exist in China. Where does it exist? Unity is a state of perfection nowhere to be found. But if China has several leading religions, I hasten to state she has but three. That is moderate enough.

Besides the religion of Confucius, there is that of Lao-Tse, which is now only practised by the lower class, and admits of metempsychosis; and the religion of Fo, or Buddhism, a doctrine appertaining to metaphysics, in which admirable points of view are to be found.

According to Buddhism the material world is an illusion; man should endeavour to isolate himself in the midst of Nature—to abstract himself. It is the doctrine of contemplation in God—that is to say, in the immaterial essence. The aim of this ideal life is to produce ecstasy; then the divine principle takes possession of the soul, penetrates it, and death consummates the mystic union. Such is the abstract principle of that religion which has its temples, altars, and a pompous ritual. I may add that the Buddhist monks, who live in vast monasteries, possess great riches.

In China, as in all other countries, there exist

sincere believers and a great number of the indifferent.

Indifference is a sort of negligence attaching to spiritual things; it is a disease which receives no medical treatment. Wherever there are men there will be some who are indifferent. Religious hatred, however, has no place among our national customs; to me it is a source of amazement. I can understand that one may hate—a person, for instance; but a religious idea—a religion!

As to atheism, it has been called a product of modern civilization. We are not yet sufficiently civilized to have no belief.

MARRIAGE.

IN China, the old bachelor and old maid are considered phenomenal.

I purposely begin the subject under the protection of this observation: I shall be the better enabled to make the most singular statements without exciting too much surprise. The old bachelor and old maid are essentially Western productions; and that kind of existence is absolutely contrary to our ideas.

In Europe it is said every valid man is a soldier; with us the same formula may hold good; it

suffices to substitute for the word 'soldier' that of 'husband.'

Quite seriously, celibacy is looked upon as a vice. Reasons must be given to excuse it. In the West one must have excuses to explain marriage. Perhaps this saying is exaggerated, but it is Parisian; and when we speak of marriage in China, we are at the antipodes of marriage in Paris. The details that follow are therefore necessarily curious.

The Chinese marry at a very early age: usually before twenty. It is by no means rare to see young people of sixteen marry girls of fourteen; and there are grandmothers of thirty! It is useless to seek climatic causes for this: it is a consequence of the family institution itself, and of the ancestral cultus. In the north and in the south of China, that is, in regions of tropical heat or of Siberian cold, the peculiarity remains the same: early marriage is universal throughout the empire.

The first preoccupation of the parents is the boy's marriage as soon as adolescence appears, and even long before that period they make their choice. They have already announced to friends their wish to unite their son to the daughter of the latter. It is agreed between them to realize the wish when the time shall arrive. Often the choice of a wife falls within the circle of the family itself. There are also friends' friends who busy themselves with making marriages, who serve as disinterested

intermediaries, and sometimes couple the right persons. For with us, as elsewhere, marriage is a lottery, and the couple only know each other after they are married.

To go courting is an unknown duty, and moreover one that our manners do not admit. In Europe, before marriage, a few weeks are given as an apprenticeship in the art of love. It is a sort of first stage, a kind of truce preceding the great battle, and the interval is filled up with fêtes and great dinners. It is a charming existence, serving as preface to marriage, and whose memories will become all the more precious as the years of marriage roll on. It seems evident that nobody wishes to incur the responsibility of the projected union. They say to the young people, 'Learn to know each other; you have two months, and then you can say "Yes," or "No." Do they know each other? or rather, can they know each other? Evidently not. I conclude, then, that it is best for the parents to be the sole responsible matrimonial agents, and for the children to marry when they are told.

I have heard the phrase: 'The happiest period of marriage is before the marriage takes place.' A Parisian would say that only a married man could have made that assertion; one must confess, however, that their manners are at least as curious as ours.

Marriages are contracted upon principle between

families of the same social standing. Certainly there are eccentric marriages, but they are exceptions.

When the choice is settled—that is, when the young girl has been fixed upon—the parents of the future husband make an official demand in marriage. That demand is followed by the ceremony of betrothal.

On that occasion the parents exchange marriage-contracts signed by the heads of the families and themselves. The heads of families with us replace the civil officers and notaries. Then the bridegroom sends the bride two bracelets of gold or silver, according to the fortune of the family, as betrothal presents. These customs are the same as in Europe; but in China they are accomplished without the presence of the bride. The bracelets are tied together by a scarlet thread, symbolizing the conjugal bond.

The presentation of the wedding gift takes place some time afterwards, and is the occasion of pompous ceremonies.

The bridegroom sends his bride a score or two baskets, richly ornamented, and containing silk, cotton, embroidery, flowers—in a word, everything pertaining to the bride's toilet. To these presents, which may be of great value, are added exquisite viands for the family, and in particular specially made cakes, which the family of the bride have to distribute to all their friends, with the official an-

nouncement of their daughter's marriage. On her part the bride, after receipt of the gift, sends her betrothed a dress, or the uniform of his rank if he is already a Mandarin, to be worn on the wedding-day. In each of the two families a great festival on the day of betrothal unites relations and mutual friends.

The marriage has always to be celebrated during the year in which the present has been sent. On the eve of the day fixed for the ceremony, the young girl's parents send to the husband everything constituting his wife's dowry—her dresses, plate, furniture, linen—in fact, all her household goods. The transmission of these objects is always made the occasion of much ostentation.

The evening of the same day at seven o'clock the husband's family send his bride a palanquin lined with embroidered red satin. This is preceded by a band of musicians; servants carrying lanterns or torches; if the family has official rank, a red umbrella and a green fan (these are the official insignia), and the tablets upon which are inscribed all the titles the family has possessed for several generations. The same evening the bride's family gives a grand dinner called 'invitation,' and the palanquin is displayed in the middle of the apartment to be admired by the guests. During the dinner the musicians sent by the son-in-law discourse joyful music. The husband's family likewise gives a grand invitation dinner, and all the objects forming the bride's dowry

are exposed to the general gaze. On the wedding-day, in the morning, four persons, chosen among the relatives or friends of the bridegroom, proceed to the house of the bride, and invite her to come to the house of her betrothed. She gets into the palanquin, and is carried by four or eight men, according to the rank of her family and of that she is about to enter.

Her palanquin is preceded by the four envoys, and the procession thus formed proceeds to the house of the bridegroom's family. Its arrival is announced by joyous flourishes of music and the detonation of fireworks. The palanquin is then carried into the apartment where the family, the friends, bridesmaids, and groomsmen are assembled. One of the latter, carrying a metallic mirror before him, approaches the palanquin, the curtains of which are still close drawn, and salutes thrice. Then one of the bridesmaids, drawing aside the curtain, invites the bride (who is still veiled) to alight and enter her room, where the bridegroom awaits her in ceremonial costume. This is the moment in which the pair see each other for the first time. After this interview they are taken to the drawing-room by two persons who have already been a long time married, and have had male children. These are the veterans of marriage, and we designate them 'the happy couple.'

In the middle of the drawing-room is a table upon which have been placed a censer, fruits, and wine. In

our idea this table is exposed to the sight of heaven. The pair then prostrate themselves before the table to thank the Supreme Being for having created them, the earth for having nourished them, the Emperor for protecting, and their parents for educating them. Then the bridegroom presents his bride to the members of his family, and to those of his friends who are present.

During the ceremony the music continues playing, and also during the dinner which succeeds it.

The simplicity of these ceremonies is worthy of remark. They are neither religious nor civil. No priest or functionary is present; there is neither consecration nor legal act. The only witnesses of the marriage are God, the family, and the friends. After dinner the doors of the house remain open all the evening, and all the neighbours and even the passengers in the street have the right to enter the house and see the bride, who stands in the drawing-room, separated from the public by a table, upon which are placed two lighted candles.

On the morrow it is the bride's turn to take her husband to visit her own family, where the same ceremonies are performed.

The foregoing is a general view of the marriage ceremony. It only varies in rich families with respect to the splendour of details, and it may easily be imagined with what magnificence such an outline may be filled in. If fashion allowed processions

in Paris, marriages might be as pompous as funerals.

But they are the reverse: marriage ceremonial has had its day in the West, and is suppressed as much as possible. It is only in the country that marriages may still be called weddings; there they dance, sing, and enjoy themselves.

The marriages I have seen in high life are about the least lively proceedings imaginable. Nobody goes to the civil marriage, and those who tolerate the religious consecration are in a hurry to leave the church afterwards. The pair have scarcely returned before they change their dress and are off to the railway station. Really, it might be an improvement to have the mayor and clergyman in a sleeping-car, and get the marriage over quickly before the train starts. The guests could assemble on the platform, and the locomotives might be requested to execute a chorus to work upon the bride's feelings. I expect this is what it will come to by-and-by.

I am simple enough to believe in the influence of ceremonies; they induce respect for the act accomplished. In spite of yourself, you feel the grandeur of something you are unable to define, but which nevertheless exists. Ceremonies make us conscious of a mystery, and by their aid we rise superior to our petty weaknesses. The less imposing the ceremony, the less important appears the act. For this reason marriage in Europe has lost its charm.

Singular to state, the honours rendered to the dead remain the same; public ceremony is respected, and mourning is not a subject for discussion. The reason is, that the ceremonies of the living are easy to ridicule; but in presence of death custom is left alone, and even the most practical refrain from interfering with the ceremony of grief.

The cultivation of the serious has in modern civilization substituted itself for every other cult. Formerly there were customs of a fascinating description, as I have learned from ancient books; people then lived in more direct communication with Nature. I have noticed in these ancient descriptions many traits of resemblance to our present customs, which lead me to believe that change is not progress—or at least rarely so. When I examine the handsome dresses of the old times—the plumed hats and embroidered mantles—I am compelled to acknowledge how ugly are the black tubes used as headgear, and those curious black coats that everybody wears, especially the servants.

I would wager that if a complete history of costumes and customs were written, their changes would be found to correspond with some event of a serious nature. Every local custom maintained love of the natal soil; costume maintained rank. Nowadays in the West everybody looks like everybody else, and nobody cares much for anything. If this is the desired progress, it is complete, and I admire it without envy.

DIVORCE.

DIVORCE exists in China in a certain way. I have said that marriage created an indissoluble bond in the eyes of the family; the legislator alone has introduced an exceptional disposition, and has only introduced it in the interest of the family itself. In truth, divorce is a legal necessity.

The reader need not here expect to find an argument for or against the law of divorce. I am no competitor with either Alexandre Dumas *fils* or M. Naquet. I state what we think of divorce in China, and am unable to say what we should think of it if the family were organized in China as it is among Western nations.

Laws are made for societies according to their transformations; laws are the monuments of evolutions—I had almost said revolutions. It is possible, therefore, that this may be a favourable conjuncture for the legal introduction of divorce in France; it is quite admissible, but personally I am unable to give an opinion.

All that I know is that in the year 253 before the Christian era, the epoch at which our code was promulgated, divorce already existed in China. When was it first made legal? The answer is obscure;

but Voltaire very pithily states: 'Divorce originated about the same period as marriage; I believe marriage is a few weeks more ancient.' Wit finds a solution for every problem.

Whatever may be the exact age of divorce, it has not been lightly instituted, and it has accompaniments in the code making it a serious matter. The law has foreseen certain circumstances unnecessary to specify, and which are within the knowledge of all married people. Upon this head the East and West are perfectly agreed. But we have something original also. We have two grounds for divorce unknown in Europe: they consist in disobedience amounting to insult towards the parents of either of the married couple, and in sterility proved at a certain age fixed by the law.

These principles will appear strange, no doubt; but, recalling the organization of the family as I have already described it, the reason for these two grounds of divorce may be understood. They will confirm the statement I have made as to the important position of the family in the social edifice of China.

All these observations are but preliminary. The only interesting question with regard to divorce is, whether it is practised. Everyone I have met, who has questioned me upon our customs, has always asked: 'Do they divorce much in China?' The question surprised me at first, but on reflection I comprehended that it was in fact the only import-

ant point. When for the first time the toothache compels you to go to a dentist, you ask your friends 'if it hurts much.' The unknown disquiets you. At the present time there is a similar feeling in France with regard to divorce: people are nervous, and so they ask, 'Do they divorce much in your country?' Be of good cheer, simple and timorous souls!

Divorce is not so dangerous as it looks. The fear of it makes it terrible, like the children's bogey. To render it harmless it suffices to know that it is a *remedy worse than the disease.* This is its true definition in China. The possibility that it may be useful excuses its existence; but it has the essential taint of a 'necessary evil,' because it is a testimony of human imperfection, and breaks the *charm* of marriage—that union projected and contracted by the family for the family.

The only serious ground of divorce, except that of adultery, which is punished by the husband despotically, consists in sterility, seeing that the end of marriage is to give children to the family, to honour their parents and continue the ancestral cult. Well, then, even when sterility of the wife is proven at the legal age, even in that case the husband does not use his legal privilege.

Divorce is a violent rupture; and to coldly determine upon it, a man must be able to forget the woman he has loved, in spite of her sterility. Can

she be made responsible for a misfortune from which she suffers as much as her husband? Of course not, and so the pair remain united. That is the result of experience. It is quite certain a man will reflect maturely before changing his life; he will ask himself whether, if he takes another legitimate wife, he will have children; perhaps after all it is a risk . . . Why, then, sadden existence by such doubtful experiments? And so they remain united, and adopt a child from among the children of the family, conformably to the law of adoption. That is a means frequently employed to cure the misfortune of sterility, especially when the family is rich.

If I were to multiply examples I should arrive at the same conclusion, that divorce, authorized by the law, is condemned by custom. It is an undeniable fact. Whatever may be said to the contrary, divorce is not a law of nature; it is the consequence of a certain social condition; and in fact, legal or illegal, does it not exist everywhere in this country? What are separations but a kind of divorce? Only I am inclined to think that in the countries where divorce does not legally exist, there would, if it did exist, be fewer divorces than there are actually separations. To be divorced! separated if you like, but divorced! they would think twice, as we do, before coming to that extremity; half-measures are not sufficient to cause serious reflection. How many couples there are who separate, and who under the same circum-

stances would not divorce! But I find I am pleading the cause of divorce, for which I ask pardon, because the respective situations of Western society and ours are absolutely different. With us a woman marries without dowry. The sublime phrase of Harpagon — 'without dowry'—would be devoid of meaning in China. Money and woman have no connection with each other; women do not inherit. I certainly have no desire to slander the fair sex; but that is one of the most fortunate arrangements of China, and one of the shrewdest. Marriage for money has no existence.

I have sometimes tried to explain to my fellow-countrymen what a marriage for money was, and they have always understood that it was a stroke of business, a bargain. With us the parents calculate long beforehand the honourable testimonials of the family in which they seek a wife for their son, and seek information as to the virtues of the young girl. In the West they count up the amount of the dowry, and calculate the expectations—that is, of deaths of relations; and when all is exactly counted and added up, and a round sum is arrived at, the marriage is arranged—*bon parti!*

Is this not the fact? Why would Molière's *sans dot* be sublime, if it were not the case?

Marriages for money are the greatest insult that can be offered to women. They, however, do not appear to resent it, for while they allow themselves

to be bought, they often have even the courage to sell themselves.

I confess, divorce seems more necessary in such a social condition as this. Marriage is such a slender bond! Ah! our customs are more solid, more dignified; and I cannot, with the best will in the world, admire this mixture of solemn traditions and of petty trivialities, resembling a performance of comic operetta. Thus constituted, marriage has become so fragile that it requires the most delicate treatment in its complications; and divorce being of the nature of a piece of heavy artillery, I fear it may blow away whatever little good is still left in French marriages. That, however, is not my business.

The united couple is high in honour in China. An old song in the 'Book of Verses' celebrates a united couple in a simple ode, of which the following is a translation:

'"The cock has crowed!" says the wife.
The man replies: "It is still dark,
It is not yet day."

'"Rise and look at the heavens!
Already the morning star appears;
'Tis time to depart. Remember thou
To bring down with thine arrows
The wild goose and duck.

'"Thou hast shot thy arrows with good aim.
Let us drink a little wine,
And pass our life together;

Let our music be in harmony,
That no discord
May offend our ears !"'

Such is the song of a pair who are neither Romeo nor Juliet, although the sentiment is worthy of them. She has no other ambition than to inculcate duties, and not to idealize a passion. And this hunter—do not suppose he is some poor mountaineer unworthy of your interest, obliged to hunt to sustain his wretched existence. It is a man of opulence, for the ode terminates thus :

'Offer precious stones
To thy friends who come to visit thee ;
They will take them away
Hanging at their girdles.'

I have said that divorce was condemned by custom. It is above all in aristocratic society that it is despised. Rather than give to publicity the secrets of private life, when the causes of rupture are not extremely grave, they prefer the system of mutual concessions.

Moreover, the woman is from motives of vanity interested in preserving peace, and not desiring a divorce, for she possesses nothing except the honours attaching to her rank as wife.

Marriage gives a woman all the privileges enjoyed by the husband, even that of wearing the uniform of his rank. Under these conditions divorce would be

the greatest folly; and if the wife understands this, the marriage will remain unbroken.

Although these arrangements are Chinese, they are not on that account less able. It is almost impossible in our country to say, *Cherchez la femme.* That is a Western idea.

Women, as I will show in another chapter, are as happy in China as in Europe; but not having the idea of personality too highly developed, they are not inclined to scandal or intrigue.

Our aristocratic families are above everything aristocratic. They have that pride of rank which maintains decorous living, and occasions to laugh at their expense would be sought in vain. In the West the expression has been used: 'I know no place where so many things happen as in the *monde.*' That is true enough. Everything happens there. This kind of *monde* is to be found everywhere; but I notice that in France it is ridiculous, which in China is not the case.

Among the working classes divorce occurs very rarely. There every member of the family works to earn the daily bread, and disputes are a waste of time. The father, mother, and children go to the fields together as in ancient times. If they quarrel, as no doubt they do sometimes, they soon make it up again. After rain fine weather! If it happens that the reasons of the dispute become grave—when, for instance, the husband squanders the property of

the community, and the wife goes to the magistrate to obtain a divorce, that officer usually refrains from pronouncing a final decision. He is the judge, and in the exercise of his discretion he waits for his admonitions to produce a good effect upon the culprit's mind. His prudence is nearly always clear-sighted. Finally, there is another consideration to be weighed by a wife determined to seek a divorce. This is the thought of her children, and the hopes she rests upon their future. In China it is the mother who brings up the children; and we shall never be civilized enough to believe there can be a more perfect education. The mother transfers her ambition to the hearts of her children. By them she may become noble and honoured; and when such a feeling as this resides in a woman's heart *it is a force.* In China we have made woman *a being always hoping.* It is this hope she opposes like a solid wall to the troubles that besiege her when her husband makes her too wretched. She is patient in order that her children may by-and-by recompense her, and avenge her of her husband's neglect.

I could not terminate this study without a word upon adultery, which European law does not punish as a crime.

With us it is admitted that the husband alone has the right to kill his wife when he finds her *in flagrante delicto.* That settles the question of divorce.

So many absurdities, however, have been written

in Europe with regard to punishments supposed to be inflicted in China on culpable wives, that I cannot refrain from quoting one of them. Alexandre Dumas *fils* says in his work, 'La Question du Divorce,' p. 85: 'In Tonquin and China a woman taken in adultery is awarded a punishment that Philyra, the mother of the centaur Chiron, had doubtless found very agreeable. True, it was a god who had assumed the form of a horse for her sake. After this punishment, an elephant trained to these executions seizes the woman with his trunk, raises her in the air, lets her fall, and crushes her under his feet.' I might be satisfied with the text as its own refutation. The absurd surpasses the probable. But this example shows the system adopted to depict our manners and customs. The fact is, there are fewer elephants in China than in France. There are perhaps two or three at Pekin shown as curiosities, as animals are in menageries. But it is the fashion to describe China as the stronghold of barbarism. If there is in any part of the world some cruel, inhuman custom —what! you cannot guess where! In China, of course!

These extravagances of the imagination should be revised and either proved or retracted, were there no other motive than the abstract love of truth.

WOMAN.

THE Chinese woman is usually imagined as a pitiful being, scarcely able to walk, and imprisoned in her household among the servants and concubines of her husband. This is another flight of imagination to be cut short, however much it may hurt the feelings of veracious travellers.

There is a striking similarity between what is recounted on this head and the celebrated definition of a lobster, which a certain dictionary solemnly stated to be a 'little red fish that walks backwards.' Of course it is hard to alter an opinion to which one is accustomed; but in presence of evidence the most honest course is to own one's mistake, and resolve not to be taken in again.

Lobsters, then, are not red, nor ever have been; and a Chinese woman walks just as well as you or I. She even runs upon her little feet, and, to add the last drop to the story-teller's bitter cup, she goes out walking, or in her palanquin, and has not even a veil to hide her from indiscreet gazers.

What a curious book, for the Chinese, might be made with all that is said about them! What would be their astonishment to find themselves so imperfectly known, when so many travellers have passed

through their cities, and received their hospitality! But one of the least flattering errors, and one which I venture to rectify, is that which makes woman a ridiculous, grotesque being, without influence, created only to bring children into the world.

This is a singular idea to create of our women. Certainly, they do not resemble women in the West; but they are women notwithstanding, with all those qualities impossible to define; and, with some slight shades of difference, all are daughters of Eve, if by that expression is to be understood the instinctive disposition which impels them to henpeck the male sex. The best service to render a woman is to guide her, and to flatter her self-love by allowing her to believe she is guiding you.

Our traditions allow us to promote the happiness of woman, inasmuch as with us the masculine is represented by the sun, and the feminine by the moon—the one illuminates, the other is illuminated; the one is radiant with splendour, the other borrows from it its pale reflections. But the sun is a beneficent and generous luminary, and the light it bestows upon the moon has also the gift of illumination; it has a tempered softness, calming the wounded spirit, and soothing the passions of the heart.

I have observed the sun is of the masculine gender in most languages, except in German, in which the moon is masculine and the sun feminine. This is a curious exception, which would be much commented

by a sage of the Celestial Empire. He would suppose the German women were occupied with politics, and managed the helm of the State, while the men worked at their daughters' trousseaux. This would not be altogether conformable to the truth.

However, since exceptions are said to prove rules, we may admit as a law the superiority of the masculine gender over the feminine. In China this law has the force of a law of Nature, and gives birth to certain consequences which have founded customs and created duties.

Man and woman, as members of the family, have special duties, to which different systems of education are adapted. Their social position is settled beforehand, and each is brought up to follow the fitting direction. Man and woman then receive a separate education. The one is occupied with studies leading to State employment; the other adorns her intelligence with useful knowledge, and learns the invaluable science of the household.

We consider the depths of science a useless burden to women; not that we insult them by supposing they are inferior to us in ability to study art and science, but because it would be leading them out of their true path. Woman has no need to perfect herself: she is born perfect; and science would teach her neither grace nor sweetness—those two lords of the domestic hearth inspired by Nature.

These principles are essential to Chinese manners,

and what distinguishes them is that they are applied literally, like a necessity.

Our women may be unacquainted with the antechambers of ministers and fashionable receptions, in which the European woman assumes all the seductions of her sex to charm the society of men; but they have no need to regret the loss. Her existence has no importance in a political point of view, and the men manage their own affairs; but cross the threshold of the house, and you enter her domain, governed with an authority that European women certainly do not possess.

In France the wife follows the condition of her husband, but in no part of the world is she more subject to the husband. I was simple enough to suppose that this word 'condition' was of great significance, but I soon discovered that the law must be studied in order to understand it, and to perceive that it gives the wife no power whatever.

By marrying, a woman becomes a minor, an outlaw—she is under guardianship; and the law empowers the husband to prevent his wife from disposing of her own property. These are details of manners and customs which might well astonish the Chinese women. *They* can replace their husbands in every circumstance of ownership; and the law recognises their right to sell and to buy, to alienate common property, to draw bills, to give their children in mar-

riage, and give them what dowry they please. In a word, they are free; and it will be the more easily understood that this should be the case when I state that in China there are neither notaries nor lawyers, and it has therefore been unnecessary to create legal exceptions in order to provide employment for that class.

Family life is the education which forms the Chinese woman, and she only aspires to be learned in the art of governing her family. She superintends her children's education, and is content to devote her existence to her family. If fate gives her a good husband, she is certainly the happiest of women.

I have said elsewhere that the honours obtained by the husband are shared by the wife, and that even by her children she may attain every satisfaction of vanity—that weakness of the human heart excusable in every clime.

It is therefore her interest to marry, in order to elevate her rank; it is even her interest to perform all the duties of maternity.

The existence of our women is more to be envied than criticized, since it is conformable to the order established by Providence; and I know plenty of Europeans who would endorse my opinion if they dared.

This subject would lose its interest if I forbore to

mention concubinage: that is the catchword of this section of my essay.

The ill-odour attaching to the word itself will prevent me from finding an impartial reader; for you may have as many mistresses as you please, but not a concubine. It all depends upon the name. Had it been said the Chinese had mistresses, they would have escaped criticism. These are distinctions difficult to explain. The mistress or concubine in China differs from the mistress in Europe inasmuch as in China she is recognised—she is a kind of legitimate mistress.

Circumstances may exist, quite easily, under which a marriage ceases to be what it ought to be. Special reasons may arise to cut short a husband's matrimonial career. Frequently change of temper or infirmities may be the cause. In Europe men easily find mistresses, and the *double ménage* is not an unknown institution in the Christian world.

According to our social system, in which the future of the rising generation is the chief care, and in which the family prosperity is the family honour itself, the dispersion of children born out of wedlock would be contrary to established custom. Concubinage was therefore instituted with this object, and it leaves no excuse for seeking adventures away from home.

The institution itself is very difficult to tolerate on first acquaintance—to a European it appears in-

delicate; but under the cloak of delicacy much greater crimes are committed when children born of illicit unions are thrown upon the world with an ineffaceable stain upon their condition, and find themselves with neither resources nor family. I consider these evils graver than the brutality of concubinage.

What excuses the system is, that it is tolerated by the legitimate wife; and she at least knows the value of the sacrifice she makes; for love binds hearts together in China as elsewhere. But true love weighs two evils, and in the family interest chooses the lesser.

Monogamy is the character of Chinese marriage. The law punishes most severely any person who contracts a second marriage while the first exists. The institution of concubinage takes nothing from the indissolubility of marriage. I might even say, at the risk of surprising my lady readers, that it strengthens that indissolubility. The concubine can only enter a family with the authorization of the legitimate wife, and under certain conditions. This consent is not lightly given, and is only accorded in a spirit of devotion to the family, and in order that the husband may have children to honour their ancestors.

I perceive that I am trying to excuse this custom rather than defend it, and am forgetting that after all it is only a faithful copy of the manners

of ancient times. Do we not read in the Bible: 'Now Sarah, Abram's wife, bare him no children; and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarah said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing; I pray thee go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarah.'

This is, then, the horrible example that our customs have copied. To be truthful, I ought to confess that, imitating in her turn the conduct of Hagar, a concubine will often abuse the peculiar situation she occupies, by despising the legitimate wife. These are the drawbacks of the institution. Although therefore the custom exists, and is not considered immoral, it is not rare to find families into which a concubine will never be allowed to enter under any circumstances.

At all events, concubines are nearly always taken from the lower class, or from among poor relations. The children are considered to be the legitimate children of the legitimate wife, in case the latter has none of her own; if, on the contrary, the wife has children already, the others are considered as recognised children—that is to say, as having the same rights as the legitimate children.

The concubine is bound to obey the legitimate wife, and considers herself in her service.

That is all!

THE WRITTEN LANGUAGE.

THE origin of language is a mystery to men of science. When we examine a language —that is, the group of sounds arranged in a methodical manner, and expressing all the most delicate shades of thought—we ask ourselves in amazement, who could have created such a marvel? and when travelling over the various regions of the world, we hear so many languages spoken, mutually incomprehensible, we must agree that there have been authors of languages, since they differ with different peoples.

As it is certain these creations date from high antiquity, we must conclude there has been an epoch of splendour in the early period of the world, and that man's intelligence has been capable of imagining and forming languages in the various tribes of which human society was at that time composed.

This, I think, is the deduction it is permissible to draw.

Our authors are unable to explain this subject more clearly than Western writers, although our written literature is two thousand years more ancient than Homer's poems. They, however, furnish some indications as to the changes undergone by written

language, indications which will doubtless be read with interest by all those interested in archæological matters.

History states that China was ignorant of a written language during the whole period between the creation of the world and the year 3000 before the Christian era.

The custom existed of making knots in cords, to recall the remembrance of a circumstance. This method of fixing an incident it is desired to recall seems to have been preserved in the familiar knot in the handkerchief.

The absence of a written language recorded almost officially possesses a certain interest, for the fact characterizes a state of ignorance, or a state of perfect tranquillity. There exist still, in our extreme east, certain tribes who have been sufficiently isolated from the rest of the world to speak only a traditional language free from any intermixture, and who are ignorant of writing. There is reason to believe that these tribes have preserved intact the lingual roots composing their languages, and that a scholar would find, in the study of these idioms, more than one parallel to draw with the most celebrated Oriental tongues.

It was after the year 3000 B.C. that an emperor, named Tchang-Ki, invented letters called Tsiang, which he formed according to the constellations of the stars. These characters did not bear the name

of letters, but of figures. They are ten centuries more ancient than the characters invented by the Egyptians.

These figures represented the objects themselves. Certainly it was a very primitive system of writing; but the realized idea of the possibility of a written language: and the efforts of future ages were to produce more perfect processes, definitely fixing the language and becoming the inseparable companions of thought.

We can follow this progress athwart the ages; for history has preserved their trace.

At first we have only rough delineations representing objects. Later on, these sketches are modified, and constitute letters called Li, which are still figures representing objects, but in curved lines. These are the characters used to compose the sacred books of Confucius and Lao-Tze.

The transformations which followed these first attempts were no longer of the same nature. The principle was changed, and characters were invented called Tze (words) written according to the pronunciation of the object. It was phonetic writing.

Later again, in the reign of the Emperor Tsang-Ouang, of the Tcheon dynasty (783 B.C.), an academician, named Su-Lin, introduced the natural principle of objects into writing.

These letters are called Ta-Tchiang. They have been preserved in the sacred books Y-King, which

alone escaped the flames when books were commanded to be burnt by the Emperor Tsin-Su-Hoang.

These letters Ta-Tchiang answered for the purpose of public instruction until the period of the new transformation, in the reign of Tsing (B.C. 246). The transformation was confined to the strokes, which became straighter and in relief. These characters are called the 'sticks of jade,' and are still made use of in official seals. The inscriptions placed upon buildings and those which figure upon vases of great value belong also to this category.

A century later another step in advance was made, by the combination of all the ancient alphabets. The characters thus formed are more regular in the lines, and our present writing does not materially differ from them.

All these successive transformations show with what care our characters are composed, so many different principles having been applied to them. They have been slowly perfected from age to age, and each century adds a new development more in accordance with the progress of intelligence. At first it is like a rough diamond, rugged and without lustre, which by degrees is worn and cut until the deep limpidity of its facets is exposed to view.

Our writing, however, was still not fixed. At the beginning of the first century an under-prefect named Tcheng-Miao was thrown into prison. He addresses

a prayer for pardon to the Emperor, and composes his characters on the basis of the writing Li. Three thousand words were used in the request, and their formation being easier and more simple than the method hitherto adopted, the Emperor acceded to the prayer; ordering at the same time the introduction of the Li system into public documents. It was under the Han dynasty the last important transformation of our written language took place. A councillor of the Emperor, wishing to give his sovereign rapid information upon the various requests addressed to him, invented a half-cursive writing, still having the system Li for its groundwork; and it was this writing which, transformed into cursive, was destined five centuries later to become the definitive written language of China. This style economises a great deal of time lost under the previous systems, either in drawing the figures or tracing the lines of which the word was composed.

It may be seen by these developments how difficult our language may be made to one who proposes to learn the various systems of writing composing our literary monuments and sacred books. The writing at present used is composed in such a manner that a word can be written with a stroke of the brush, without leaving off. All the strokes are joined together. This is indisputably a progress most convenient for the various usages of life; but official

letters, examination papers, and reports to the Emperor have to be written in a neat hand with great precision, and this is rather troublesome work. We have copies varying according to the method, and their study forms one of the most important occupations of our education.

Of course it is known how our letters are written, the use of Indian ink not being confined to China. It is perhaps opportune to mention that it is not enough to moisten the ink and take up a brush. It is requisite to moisten the ink to a certain fixed extent, and to hold the brush perpendicular to the table you write upon.

I will conclude these notes by giving my Western readers a celebrated lesson upon the various rules of writing with the brush.

There are eight rules of writing. 1st. The shape of a letter should be bold, and the strokes should be more or less in relief according to the connections of the letter. 2nd. The parts composing a letter should be straight, energetic, and proportioned. The beginning and the end should be distinguished by plain lines. 3rd. The marks which are not included in the same word should be natural, like the fins of a fish or the wings of a bird. 4th. The feet of a letter should be proportioned to the size of a letter, and placed either top, bottom, right, or left. 5th. A word, whether square or round, should be formed of very straight lines in the straight parts, and of

rounded lines in the curves. 6th. The junction lines should consist of progressive curves, without irregularities. 7th. The termination of a straight line should not be pointed like the brush itself, but very decided. 8th. Before coming to the curve of a line, the diminution or strengthening of the line must be already begun.

If this lesson is carefully considered it will perhaps, better than my descriptions, give a notion of a character which is a sort of miniature, and in which the idea is painted as upon a picture. These lines crossing each other in every direction, these shades of the brush, these thick or thin, straight or curved lines, express and represent all the multiple variations of thought, with the finish of an artistic work.

In this method of writing applied to language there is an advantage which, in the West, can be claimed only for speech itself. In the eyes of Europeans the beauty of a language resides in its sound, and it is not unusual to hear praised the harmony of a word or even of a phrase. But these modes of language are not represented by writing. The words are dumb, and have but orthographical relations. The energy or faintness of the letters in no way modifies the sense of a word; it will always have the same value, or if it ever changes it is by a trick of style which cannot be often used without tediousness. And yet is not the mind the world of *nuances* and delicate abstractions, and is not the

cultivation of the intelligence continually tending to augment the sensibility of that faculty? How can that natural vocation be satisfied with words of fixed meaning?

And if an author succeeds by talent and good fortune in writing in a particular style satisfactory to the mind, his secret dies with him, and whosoever endeavours to resuscitate it is but a plagiarist. But we in China lose not our treasures so lightly; we preserve them. They live in our characters, and, once created, make the round of China, as an expression of Voltaire makes the round of the world; with this difference, that the one has become a new expression, and the other will never be anything but a quotation.

I trust I have made myself understood by these comparisons; not that I seek to unduly exalt one system at the expense of the other, but it seems to me that the Western languages are devoid of many of the resources that might satisfy or inspire an author.

I have observed that the orator is infinitely more influential than the writer. Why? Because the life of the language is in the sound. Well, it is that life that exists in our characters; they have not only a body, but also a soul to give them warmth and motion.

CLASSES.

THE people of China are divided into four classes or categories of citizens, according to the merits and honours that custom and the law of the land attribute to each. These classes are the literary, the agricultural, the manufacturing, and the commercial. Such is the order of the social hierarchy in China.

The literary occupy the first place, as representing the thinking class; the agriculturists have the second rank, as being the class that nourishes; the manufacturers also enjoy great consideration on account of their industry; but the commercial class is the lowest.

In point of fact, the two classes esteemed and honoured are the two first; they constitute the aristocracy of mind and of labour. Our nobility could only inscribe upon their blazon a pen—I mean a paint-brush—or a plough: in one, Heaven for field; in the other, Earth. Does it not seem that the preoccupations of man have been from all time solely turned to these two poles: thought towards heaven—that is to say, the invisible and unknown; manual labour towards earth beneath our feet? These are the natural sources of human labour,

and we have respected the disposition in fixing our social distinctions.

If knowledge is the highest of occupations, the most noble and the most honoured, it is because it makes men capable of governing, and because from among the literary are taken the functionaries of the State.

But the preference accorded to the works of the mind is not exclusive. Agriculture is equally honoured, because the land is the principal source of revenue. Compared to industry and commerce, agriculture is called the root, and they the branches.

THE LITERARY CLASS.

ALL the members of the four classes I have just mentioned are admitted to take part in the competitive examinations which determine degrees.

This right is in itself more precious than all those inscribed in the celebrated code emphatically named 'The Immortal Principles, or the Rights of Man.'

In no part of the world is there a more democratic institution, and I am surprised they have not thought of adopting it in those Western countries where the 'Immortal Principles' have not yet created the best

of governments and the least imperfect social condition.

The degrees which are called in China, as in Western countries, those of bachelor, licentiate, and doctor, are not simple diplomas, bearing witness to the relative extent of knowledge in art and science. They have quite another character, inasmuch as they confer titles to which rights and privileges are attached. The song of Lindor would not be understood in China, and the wishes of a 'simple bachelor' would not be so modest.

In France I have been greatly surprised to observe how slightly university grades are respected. The degree of bachelor, for instance, is absolutely despised, both by those who have not obtained it—naturally—and by those who have passed the examination. A man never mentions that he is a bachelor, and nobody thinks of asking another if he has obtained that grade; it would be considered as great a blunder as asking her age of a woman who used to be pretty.

As to the degrees of licentiate and doctor, only those who intend to devote themselves to serious study and high-class teaching take the trouble to obtain them. But the degree of doctor is not a distinction creating an office and embellishing a career. You may be a master of arts and doctor of science, and solicit a humble post upon an equal footing with a dunce. These anomalies I am assured

are the rule; and I find that in spite of my repugnance I am bound to believe that such is really the case.

After ten years' sojourn in Europe and numerous studies, I am still vainly asking myself the question, 'What principle among the institutions of the Western world can really be called democratic or liberal?' I can see none, nor has anybody shown me one so pre-eminent in those qualities as the right of all citizens to the examinations conferring degrees. Of course I shall be reminded of universal suffrage; but that is a weathercock—a principle without principles, and one must have a singular idea of public opinion to imagine it can manifest itself according to decree at a precise period, such a day and such an hour. The most curious thing is that while no one could propose the election of the Academicians by universal suffrage without making himself ridiculous, they yet allow the members of the legislature to be chosen by this same system. I imagine the merits of the latter are less easily discerned than those of the former. What conclusion must we draw, then?

Where is the recompense that should be given to assiduous work guided by a noble intelligence? If you are poor, having for sole wealth an honourable name and the ambition to be worthy of it, can you by study alone and its rewards obtain a place in the State administration?

Can you rise by the credit of your science alone? Can you require of it to obtain for you a privilege? Can you obtain by it honours and power? In China, yes; in Europe, no.

It is not, therefore, a vain boast when I claim that our customs are more liberal, more just, and more salutary; for the best taught citizens are the best behaved, and it is by the ambitious that public tranquillity is disturbed. Require as a qualification to fill a high function of State, the test of the highest merit, in the same way as tried bravery, a sense of honour, and military knowledge are required of an officer in the army, and you will at once suppress the struggles on Ministerial backstairs, intrigues, and favouritism.

This is the secret of the stability of our pacific empire. To adopt the system would change—a great many changes; but the day Europe ceases to love changes she will be perfect, and we shall only have to envy her.

China has no official education.

Our Government has a more enlightened idea of liberty than certain Western States, who make instruction obligatory without giving it any definite aim. The Government controls only the examinations, and candidates are only subjected to one law —the most tyrannical of all—that of knowing.

It must again be observed that our grades do not merely signify merit, but the superiority of merit.

They are in fact obtained by competitive examination, the only method of making a degree of value.

No better proof can be adduced than the system of nominations in European armies from special schools, entrance to which is obtained by competitive examination. These schools become veritable institutions, where an *esprit de corps* is formed, exclusive, proud of its privileges, and constituting a kind of aristocracy, whose influence is very elevating. I admire the Ecole Polytechnique and its regulations. Do we not see what *prestige* it maintains, in spite of revolutions which have destroyed so many excellent things? It is because the grade demands respect and commands it.

Suppose the profession of barrister were subjected to competitive examination, and only a certain number of diplomas were conferred each year, what immense benefits such a reform would produce! The right of pleading would become an honour, and the *esprit de corps* that barristers claim to possess would acquire real dignity. But this is a caprice of my imagination, and were it only to confirm the truth of an evangelic principle, we must leave the last the privilege of becoming the first. This is the essence of the democratic spirit.

In China studies are carried on in the family. Well-to-do families have tutors; but in every village the poorest can send their children to schools; and there are both day and night schools. The children

attending them are so numerous that the fees are very trifling.

The order of our examinations will perhaps possess some interest for my European readers, although the details may be learned from travellers who have written upon China. I have no pretension to open a new world. I merely wish to draw attention to certain institutions not altogether barbarous, and for which it is admissible to profess a sentiment passing the bounds of pity. I help my fellow-creatures to see with my eyes; that is my sole ambition.

When the candidates suppose themselves sufficiently prepared to undergo the first examination, they send their names to the under-prefecture, where the examination takes place. There are six trials.

The candidate selected after the sixth trial is considered worthy to undergo the examinations that take place before the prefect at the capital of the province. This examination also consists of a certain number of trials; and if the candidate comes forth victorious from all, he presents himself to the imperial examiner specially delegated to each province.

It is only after being admitted by this examiner that a candidate receives the grade of bachelor.

Each trial lasts an entire day; and about fifteen have to be undergone to satisfy the conditions of the programme. The whole examination is in writing and the candidates are shut in little cells, without

the assistance of any book, having nothing with them but their ink, brush, and paper. They have to compose upon the subjects of literature, poetry, history, and philosophy. These examinations take place every year, at the chief place in the prefecture.

Examinations for the second degree conferring the license take place every three years at the provincial capital, and are composed of three examinations, each lasting three days, and spreading over twelve days in all. The candidates are generally very numerous, sometimes more than ten thousand —for two hundred degrees.

Examinations for the third degree, conferring the doctorate, take place at Pekin, in the same order as the examinations for the second degree. Those selected from this competition are still subject to a last examination in the presence of the Emperor, and are classified by order of merit in two categories. The first numbers only four members, who are immediately received academicians. The second category comprises candidates who will have to compete still further to enter the Academy. The third category furnishes the attachés to the ministerial departments; and the fourth, the under-prefects, or officers of equal rank.

The number of doctors admitted at each session varies from two to three hundred.

The academicians become members of the Impe-

rial College of Hau-lin, and form the highest body, from whom the Emperor's Ministers are usually chosen.

No need to say, after this enumeration, that the life of a literary man is passed in examinations.

In Europe, at the age of twenty years the time is come for the greater number to put study aside, and begin to forget. As for us, we at that age begin to entertain a higher ambition—that is, to hope for a new grade, to which an increase of honour and fortune will correspond.

The Chinese hierarchy is not founded upon seniority, but upon merit. The degree fixes the position; and the higher the position, the higher must be the merit of its occupant.

No one in China would think of laughing at the head of a department, for the simple reason that the head of a department is necessarily more capable than those under him.

Promotion by seniority is a mistake; it is not the bald head that is meritorious; and the young attachés of European ministries have sufficiently edified me upon the failings of seniority, to make me appreciate the sagacity of our rulers in ignoring such a system.

Nothing can give an idea of the demonstrations of joy at news of a success in the examinations. I have seen in England and Germany, the only countries possessing universities, processions of students, fêtes,

and congratulations, which certainly lacked neither enthusiasm nor grandeur. But in China these rejoicings have a wide extension, and are very popular.

The family rejoicings are as pompous as on the occasion of a marriage. The relations meet first of all in the temple of their ancestors, for the purpose of making them the offering of the acquired distinction; then magnificent feasts are given to all the members of the family, and all the friends. Several days are given up to the most lively manifestations of joy. The successful candidate is carried in triumph. When he goes to announce the tidings of his success to his acquaintance and the members of the family, a band of music accompanies him, his friends surround him, carrying red silk flags, and form a guard of honour. He is acclaimed by the people like a king who has gained a great victory. On the walls of his dwelling are posted letters notifying all of the success he has attained, and the same letters are sent to all the families with whom he maintains relations. Of course the splendour of these fêtes and honours is not calculated to damp the ardour of aspiring candidates. All these solemnities kindle emulation, and incite those who have succeeded in the first examination to attempt the second. The fêtes on the occasion of a successful examination for the doctorate assume the proportions of a public rejoicing, shared by all the inhabitants of the candidate's birthplace.

Besides the examinations I have mentioned, there are others following the first grade, and rewarding success with a pension or a title. Those fortified with this title may compete for places in the magistracy, the members of which are not directly selected by examination.

Lastly, if to these honours, sufficient to inflame the most sluggish ambition, we add the belief so dear to the Chinese, that they are reflected upon their family, and are agreeable to their ancestors, and the fact that the father and mother will receive the same rank and the same consideration, we may realize what a power the institution of competition exerts upon the nation.

It might possibly happen, as we see elsewhere, that the parvenu son would despise his parents remaining in the same humble position as that in which he himself was born. But our laws have been prudent, and this scandal does not exist in our society. The father and mother rise at the same time as their son; they receive the rank and honour of his degree, and all the family are happy on the day of a triumphant examination. Ah, our ancestors understood the human heart, and their institutions are truly wise! They deserve the admiration and gratitude of every friend of humanity. The more I know of modern civilization, the more my love for our old institutions increases: for they alone realize what they promise—peace and equality.

JOURNALISM AND PUBLIC OPINION.

IF we defined 'a journal' as exactly as the definition of a term so complex could be stated, we might say it was a periodical publication intended to create a public opinion.

I imagine most journals would accept this definition, for it is a noble calling to create an opinion and diffuse it almost instantaneously by thousands of copies in that great and everlastingly new world we call the public. I am an admirer of the European journal. It helps one to pass the time agreeably; in travelling it is a companion that follows you as if attached to your special service; you find it everywhere, at all the railway stations; its very title is comforting to see, and in company with a newspaper one regrets less keenly the absent. I think this is perhaps the best that can be said for it.

The influence of newspapers upon opinion is not so great as might be apprehended. If one journal alone were always read, it is possible that in time—supposing the journal so consistent as always to say the same thing—it might make a deep impression upon the subscriber's mind. But the public reads so many papers of every shade of opinion that it ends by belonging to every political party at once,

which is of course convenient at a change of Ministry.

Nevertheless, newspapers satisfy a requirement. Society is so organized that it has become necessary to utilize every disposable means of transmission of thought, to regale it with the rumours of the world. The journal usually reports what happens; when it is very well informed it says nothing more. Sometimes it risks reporting what has not happened—under reserve; this is the only news that might be interesting, and the next day it is contradicted. Besides this, a newspaper has leading articles which readers of the same opinion highly approve; but I am told that no one has ever seen—except perhaps in the provinces—a convert of journalism.

Although we can hardly say that journals preach in the desert, they preach to the public, which is rather of the nature of the desert, that moving world, now plain, now mountain, where nothing stands still and nothing lives, whose oases are a mirage, and which seems to exist only by the noise of the tempests stirring its sandy waves.

In truth it is a slippery, capricious public. What pleases it to-day displeases it to-morrow; it is never satisfied. Notice these lunatics running after newspapers every hour of the day: they read ten or twenty with the same stoical air, and then you hear them groan there is nothing in the papers! They wait for the evening paper—nothing! to-morrow's

paper—again nothing! At last some news comes—and everybody knows it before the papers.

As to the serious articles, it seems they are never read. They are very well written, but possess no interest except for their authors, who read them twenty times, and retail them again and again without tiring, to those of their friends who are fortunate enough to meet them. To appreciate this enthusiasm, one must have seen one's self in print in the first column, seen the article in the hands of some member of this great public, seen him read it, anxiously follow the thoughts of this unknown friend—you would embrace him if you dared, and tell him the author's name. He who has never known these emotions, knows not the part played by the journal: it is a very useful, very precious institution—for those who write!

That is my opinion, which will assist in elucidating what follows.

In China no newspaper exists bearing any analogy to a European journal—I mean a journal published under the *régime* of complete freedom of the press. It is a liberty which does not flourish in the Empire of the Centre, and I will add—not to appear to regret it—that there are great empires even in the West where that liberty is not absolute. But although we have neither freedom of the press nor journalism, we have a public opinion, and it will be seen later on that it is not an empty name.

The Chinese journal has its history and its antiquities, like everything else appertaining to our manners and customs. We read in our books that in the twelfth century before the Christian era, the people were accustomed to sing songs adapted to the manners of each province. The Emperor Hung-Hoang of the Tcheou dynasty ordained a compilation of all these popular chants, in order to become acquainted with the manners of his people. These chants were lost in the great fire of books; but Confucius collected three hundred of them, of which he composed his 'Book of Verses.' We consider that publication as the origin of journalism in China.

Although for a long time past there has been no similar publication, and the custom of popular songs has fallen into disuse, one fact remains clear, namely, that the sovereigns of China have always been informed of the state of public opinion relative to the acts of their government. For many ages past there has been a permanent council composed of functionaries called censors, whose mission is to present reports to the sovereign upon the state of public opinion in the different provinces of the empire. These reports constituted a newspaper, having for readers the Emperor and the high dignitaries of the realm. Later on these reports were given a wider publicity, and at the present time they form the journal called the *Pekin Gazette*, which is in fact the official journal of the empire.

Freedom of the press does not exist in China, because it would be contrary to our idea of the character and truth of history.

For us there is no contemporary history published. History publishes only the annals of the dynasties, and so long as the same dynasty occupies the throne the publication of its history is not permitted.

That history is written contemporaneously by a conclave of literary men, who exercise as much care and discreet delay in its composition as the immortals of the French Academy in compiling the dictionary.

Of course, it will be understood that it is necessary to keep all these documents secret, in order that they may be an exact reproduction of the truth; and it will be the more easily admitted that this must be the case, when we remember that celebrated statesmen in Europe follow precisely the same plan in the publication of the memoirs they write upon contemporary events. These memoirs often do not see the light until a determined period after the writer's death, and will not become historical documents until the time comes to write history after the manner of Tacitus, without passion and without hatred.

It must not be supposed, however, that this mutism of history is invariable. In certain circumstances we see audacious censors who do not hesitate to accuse very high functionaries of administrative

irregularities, to order an inquiry, and if necessary inflict punishment upon the guilty. The sovereign himself is not exempted from liability to censure.

This council of censors is a really unique institution, inasmuch as it realizes the same ideal pursued by European journalism. It is composed of the most celebrated literary men from every province. They have the privilege, by the Emperor's permission, of reporting what they please, even *on dits*, and they are never reprimanded for the groundlessness of their statements.

The *Official Gazette* is usually only taken in official circles. The people are in complete ignorance of political events. This is not for want of experiments in that direction, but they have not succeeded. In truth, since the ports have been opened to international commerce, foreigners have established Chinese journals edited by Chinese upon the European model.

Example is contagious, good as well as bad, and in some instances Chinese have endeavoured to establish newspapers in the provinces. These enterprises have come into collision with 'press offences,' that newspaper bane, which governments use pretty frequently when journalistic license exceeds the measure prescribed by existing laws.

This local journalism therefore died a violent death, and no one thinks of resuscitating it.

Foreigners who are considered neutral alone

continue to carry on the newspapers. Those with the greatest circulation are the journals of Shanghai and of Hong-Kong. There are other papers published in English, but they are only taken by the resident foreigners.

There is another kind of periodical, that might be called a society journal, produced by the Chinese. They insert in it their impressions of travel, the different important events at which they have been present, and in general anything worth noting. But if these narratives relate to political questions, they cannot be published so long as the same dynasty remains upon the throne. This law may appear excessive, but it is powerful to ensure absolute historical truth.

The press is a kind of statistic of the opinions of the day. I take the day for unity. From this point of view journals are of great practical utility when these opinions are numerous. In China, where the press has no existence, it is consequently not easy to discover what opinions are. However, in political matters we have also our Conservatives and our Democrats; we have partisans of the ancient traditions of the empire unwilling to make the least concession to the spirit of innovation who might fraternize with the reactionaries of every part of the world. The democratic spirit, possessing also its numerous devotees, has not the same tendency as in the West, where democracy admits of an infinity of meanings

unnecessary here to define, but which assuredly would not be to the taste of our democrats. The latter believe they are promoting the interests of the people in such a manner that the people may receive some profit. It is useful, I think, to draw this distinction.

These democrats admit the principle that what is beneficial to the community is good; and in many cases will not oppose a reform upon pretext of scruples which others on the contrary consider inviolable.

The voice of the people is called in China also the voice of God. Such is the device adorning the uncrowned blazon of all the peoples of the earth, as if they were the descendants of some ancient dynasty sprung from God Himself. This formula exists in every nation. Our four hundred millions of people are not ignorant of its profound meaning, and the voice makes itself heard in the very centre of government counsels in case of necessity.

The people is in truth represented by the literary class, who go up to the capital from the provinces, and although without official title, have the right of presenting requests in which the necessary reclamations are embodied. These requests are made in the name of the people.

The practice may be considered a kind of representation without election; the learned and literary have the honour, which they owe to the

culture of their intelligence, of becoming the natural advocates of the people, and causing the voice of God to be heard. A magnificent tribute, I consider, paid to industry and perseverance, and inspiring the deepest respect for the tradition which perpetuates this custom.

If ever China were to change her political system, and adopt one of the modes of national representation in vogue among Western nations, she would remember this tradition, and give the right of election and the right to be elected only to those distinguished by study and virtue.

The requests presented in the name of the provinces by their literary representatives are examined with care, and when the laws permit, if the object reclaimed be just, accepted by the Government.

But it often happens that to satisfy the wishes contained in a request, it would be necessary to create a new law. Now with us the code is unchangeable. It is requisite, therefore, to create exceptions for these particular cases, which may in their turn furnish precedents under similar circumstances.

It is thus we understand national representation. The method is simple, and causes us no embarrassment. We have none of that uneasiness suffered by States with parliamentary government. The empire is like a large family, whose sovereign chief promotes all interests and maintains all rights, with an

authority handed down to him by ages of history, and consecrated by traditional respect. On the day the empire, by the voice of all the people, calls the attention of its governors to the necessity of a change in the fundamental institutions of the State, these changes may be effected without disturbance, because they will not be inspired by passion, but by the sole desire to maintain peace in all the provinces.

But that day has not yet seen the faintest glimmer of its dawn; and if the journalism implanted in our ports believed for a moment in the influence it pretended to exercise over opinion, it has after experience had to acknowledge it was a dream.

To obtain an idea of the excellence of an invention, it is not sufficient for a journal or review to extol its benefits.

In a country where the prestige of newspaper articles is non-existent, it must be experience itself that demonstrates the reality of a desired progress. It is impossible to judge without seeing the effects.

This is our only crime in the eyes of Europe.

The subject I touch upon is one of the most delicate to handle; for I desire to give my opinion, and at the same time not seem to despise what excites the wonder and admiration of Europeans themselves. But sincerity excuses all.

The essential character of Western civilization is to be encroaching. There is no necessity to demonstrate that.

In former times the hordes of barbarians were likewise encroaching, not with the object of bringing the benefits of a new spirit, but for the purpose of pillaging and ruining prosperous countries. The civilized people of the West follow the same method with the pretension of establishing universal happiness.

The initial point of their idea of progress is violence. I have the presumption to think the method is not perfect, and that it will find, at all events in China, as many opponents as there are people of sense. In China, as everywhere else among the human race, the struggle for existence tends to happiness, and the only progress applicable is that which assures peace and combats pauperism. War and pauperism are the two scourges of humanity, and when China is convinced that the spirit of innovation, of which the Western world is so vain, with all those ingenious inventions whose wonders we applaud so much, possess the secret of making nations peaceable and increasing their happiness—ah, then China will join enthusiastically in the universal concert! Those who know us have never doubted on this point.

But has that conviction been arrived at? What are the commercial importations into those ports a celebrated treaty has made international? Fire-arms. We hoped for the machinery of peace, they bring us the machinery of war, and as a specimen of

modern civilizing institutions we inaugurate standing armies.

And they complain we are mistrustful!

Well, at the risk of exasperating all who think differently, let me say, we hate with all our strength everything which directly or indirectly threatens peace, and excites the combative spirit in the already sufficiently imperfect human disposition. What need have we of these wars hateful to mothers? and to what ideal can the prospect of one day arming our four hundred millions bring us? Is it an idea of progress to turn aside public wealth from the natural path pointed out by the spirit of reason, to make it contribute to the organization of every anguish resulting from the employment and abuse of force? It seems to me this is going backwards and to the bad. We shall never be persuaded to consider the military spirit an element of civilization: quite the reverse! We are convinced it is a return to barbarism.

But firearms are not the only articles of prime necessity offered to us. To tell the truth, they are nearly the only ones whose utility has been proved to us: the demonstration has been perfect. But there are other essays which have not succeeded, upon the subject of which it has always been thought that we have displayed a prejudice contrary to the laws of reason.

As I have already said, everything is submitted in

China to examination, and the examination bears not only upon the merit of the proposed system, but upon the advantages it has procured. I take, for example, the railway. It has not succeeded with us, although it is a marvellous method of travelling; but marvellous as it is, has it been considered useful? Up to the present time, No. Consequently it has not been taken in hand. Moreover, the execution of such a project would violently disturb our social system. We cling above everything to family traditions, and among them not one is dearer to us than the worship of ancestors, and respect for their tombs. The locomotive overturns all in its path, it has neither heart nor soul, it must rush straight forward like the hurricane.

Our people have not yet, therefore, decided to allow the invasion of the fiery horse, and really one cannot be utterly amazed at such a refusal when it is considered that the Institute of France itself declined to admit Fulton's project relative to the application of steam to the locomotion of ships. They deserve at least as much indulgence as the wise men of the Académie Française; and even if they were to destroy balloons through ignorance of the ascensional force, or refuse to make use of the gas-light, such conduct would not be wholly dissimilar from that of Western nations. This gives me the opportunity of saying that men must be convinced in spirit, and that it is better to demonstrate a truth by evident

facts, than to impose it violently, and trample traditions and customs under foot.

What is imposed by force is never accepted: this is an experience it is not absolutely necessary to go to China to make. In France, it is said, nobody would eat potatoes at first, because potatoes were forced upon them. The people would have nothing to do with them—would not even taste them. The example of the Court was necessary; in fact, it was requisite, if we may believe history, for potatoes to be expressly prohibited, and then everybody ate them.

That is true civilization which proceeds by knowledge of the human heart—the same under every degree of latitude. How many *pommes de terre* we might have been induced to eat, if they had gone about it in a proper manner! But instead of that they have brought us the *pomme de discorde!*

Ask a Chinese what he calls the English; he will tell you they are the opium merchants. In the same way he will tell you the French are missionaries. It is under these two aspects he knows them, and it will easily be understood that he retains a lively remembrance of these foreigners, since the former ruin his health at the expense of his purse, and the latter upset his ideas. I simply mention the fact; for, of course, it may after all be true that opium and new religions are irresistible steps in advance. The impartial reader will decide.

All the foreigners who seek China have but one end in view—speculation; and what is extremely curious, all these speculators despise us because we exhibit distrust. Is not that an observation worth its weight in gold? Distrust! really! how groundless! 'Our enemy,' says the universal fabulist, 'is our master;' but it is likewise the man who makes a snatch at our purse under pretext of civilization. Distrust? Why, we can never show enough!

We are obliged to mix together in our conception all strange peoples and individuals and call them foreigners. But I wish to state that we can distinguish the good from the bad: for there are foreigners who honour their nationality by the respect they show for our institutions. I am speaking of diplomatists, who charm us by their good breeding, and who accomplish tasks, often delicate, with a courtesy and tact which are the best advertisement of their civilization; I am speaking also of literary men, who come to study our languages, and to gather from our books the instruction given by the most ancient human society in the world. These are not foreigners to us, but friends with whom we are proud to exchange thoughts; and we dream sometimes of progress and civilization with these legitimate sons of humanity, who have nothing in common with the mountebanks infesting our ports.

In bringing to a conclusion this review of opinion upon divers subjects, I cannot refrain from mention-

ing the missionaries, and the state of opinion with respect to them. I intended to make a clean breast of it, and in addition to the good that is said of them, to state the reverse which is left unsaid. But I dreaded to appear prejudiced, and I resolved when writing these sketches to put down nothing that might lay me open to a suspicion of disrespect for liberty of thought. Fortunately, I found in one of the publications of the *Société des Elèves de l'Ecole libre des Sciences politiques*, a school of which I have the honour to be a pupil, a work by M. Vernède, from which I may quote what I did not personally venture to state from fear of not being listened to. This is what the author says ('Annuaire Exercice,' 1875-6):

'Three centuries ago the writings of missionaries gave an enthusiastic description of China. Everyone, they said, is happy in this wonderful country. God has heaped a thousand blessings upon it; He has given it rich fabrics, a delicious perfumed beverage, and products in abundance.

'The powerful and intelligent Society of Jesus had quickly seen what advantages the country offered, and in consequence despatched thither very eminent personages, who immediately comprehended that they must conciliate sympathies, identify themselves with Chinese ideas, and completely cast off their European character before speaking of dogma and mysteries to this great people, who would not have

understood them. In 1579 we see illustrious Italians travelling through China, teaching astronomy, physics, arts, and religion.

'Eagerly welcomed by the Emperor, and pensioned from the treasury, they captivate all classes of society by their irresistible manners. To convince, they had but to speak. The reason of this was that they did not revile, as is now done, the admirable worship of ancestors, that same worship we find in ancient Rome. They respected Confucius, and were careful not to offend rooted convictions upon which the political edifice of the empire reposes.

'In recognition of their intelligent work, the great Emperor Kang-Hi issues an edict allowing them to open churches. The preamble is extremely curious:

'"I, President of the Ministry of Rites, present with respect this request to your Majesty, to humbly obey your orders.

'"We have deliberated, I and my assessors, upon the affair your Majesty communicated to us, and have concluded that these Europeans, who have crossed vast oceans, have come from the ends of the earth attracted by your wisdom and incomparable virtue. They hold now the superintendence and the tribunal of mathematics; they have rendered great services to the empire.

'"The Europeans who are in the provinces have never been accused of doing mischief, or of com-

mitting any offence. The doctrine they teach is not bad, nor capable of causing trouble.

'"We are of opinion they should be allowed to open churches, and every one permitted to worship God in the manner he pleases."

'Soon, however, the Dominicans and Franciscans, jealous of the power of the Jesuits in the far East, caused censure and persecution to issue from the Vatican. They destroyed the magnificent edifice raised by their rivals, and in 1773 procured their expulsion by a bull of Pope Clement XIV.

'The Lazarists substituted another method for theirs. They wounded the moral habits of the nation, their prejudices and beliefs. The Jesuits would have been admirable auxiliaries for European policy and commerce; they were influential throughout China, and gradually prepared this great people to welcome and exchange riches with the nations of the West. The Lazarists compromised everything.'

This citation is a perfectly faithful narrative. It is fair to state that wherever missionary zeal exerts itself only upon the mind, it will experience no hostility on the part of the Government. If their aim is the education of the soul by the observance of evangelical precepts, they will do well to apply them personally before they can be certain of exciting sympathy in place of mistrust. When under the cloak of religion they conceal suspicious designs, such manœuvres are detested even by Chinese, and

no one can undertake to defend missionaries whom a too ardent zeal has converted into political spies.

Perhaps I have said enough to obtain some respite in the opinion of those who hurl the name of 'barbarian' at our heads. We are distrustful, that is all. But how can we be otherwise?

In an age of experiment, cannot some better system than a 'protectorate' be invented to constitute an alliance with distant countries? Is it impossible for governments to become better acquainted and prepare with one accord all those concessions that minds created to understand each other can mutually make? The cause of civilization would gain in this way what every cannon-shot tends to deprive it of. But noise and smoke are too precious, and the laurels of glory only flourish upon ruins.

PREHISTORIC EPOCHS.

THE Western nations have no ancient history. They are not even sure of the authenticity of certain events which happened scarcely fifteen hundred years ago. Beyond the Christian era nothing definite can be distinguished; it is historical chaos. Darkness hangs over the Western world.

As we leave the Western shores behind, the obscurity progressively diminishes. The light grows

brighter as we approach the East, the country of the sun. Rome and the Italian populations add five centuries of history, while the poems of Greece and her Asiatic colonies reach back to the twelfth century B.C. Penetrating farther into Asia and the lands bordering upon it, we discover civilizations which have illuminated the banks of the Euphrates and Nile with their splendour. Babylon and Nineveh, Memphis and Thebes, with their stupendous ruins, still bear witness of a brilliant civilization dating back to beyond the twentieth century B.C.

All the nations bordering on the Mediterranean have had grand destinies, and their labours have promoted universal civilization.

Beyond them, however, history, arrested by no prejudice, and seeking the truth, indicates an ancestry to these peoples, and inscribes upon her tablets the date of four thousand years B.C. She seeks the trace of all those States which seem to have been the dispersed tribes of some great people, and who by turns have disappeared in a whirlwind of invasion, carrying with them the secret of their origin.

One might imagine, judging history according to the sentimental method, that a mysterious power had raised and then destroyed each of these States, placing power in the hands of a privileged people for its own purposes, and subsequently depriving them of it. That, in truth, is a way of explaining historical events which does not lack originality. It is enough,

however, to glance at a map of these various States to see that their geographical future was necessarily unstable, and that they must sooner or later have been carried away by the great stream, whatever struggles they might be involved in before that decisive epoch. They were upon the path of both Eastern and Western countries, and were inevitably the prey of both. It is certain that if all these States, instead of destroying each other, had been powerful enough to resist invasion, and become colonizers in their turn, the West would have had another destiny. The foundation of Massilia in the sixth century B.C. is a proof of the justice of this observation. It was, however, but an isolated case.

What I am endeavouring to establish is this: if there have been Asiatic peoples from the Mediterranean Sea to the Mountains of Thibet, enjoying a perfect civilization in the most remote ages, why should the people of China—that mysterious land the classical conquerors were unable to reach—not be the depositories of the same civilization? A European philosopher might draw the induction without infringing the rules of logic.

It would be curious indeed if the burning sands of Persia and Arabia had been peopled, and not the fertile countries of the Empire of the Centre bordering on the Pacific Ocean! It is an absurdity impossible to admit; and if only it be remembered, that already at the remote epoch of the kingdoms

of Darius, the ambition of conquerors meditated expeditions beyond the countries of the unconquered Scythians, against peoples of whom they scarcely knew the name, it is clear that China is historically the most ancient state in the world, and in possession of the most correct traditions of the human race.

China has owed to its geographical position alone the fact of having escaped conquest. On the east it is bordered by the Ocean, which may be considered a vast uninhabited continent; on the north, the frozen regions of the Pole; on the south, chains of mountains and wandering tribes. It is only on the western border that China is vulnerable. But the nations extending on this side of its frontiers serve as a shield; and throughout antiquity China hears the far-off sound of combat, and contemplates, without sharing, every social catastrophe.

From the moment that silence settles down between our great walls and the tomb of Alexander, our isolation becomes absolute: it was the same throughout antiquity.

Let us suppose a tribe belonging to the most ancient race of humanity, and forgotten by the rest of the world in a corner of the earth, developing itself according to the laws of Nature—according to the notion of progress, that is to say, with the intuition of better things—finding its resources in itself, not dreaming of passing the limits within which it lives; on the contrary, believing it inhabits a world

distinct from the others: let us suppose all this, and we shall be able to figure to ourselves the Chinese—a nation no one can know, because it is unique in humanity.

One can, in truth, only know by comparing; and only terms having points of contact can be compared; otherwise we become involved in error. That is the origin of all the prejudices current concerning China and the Chinese.

What surprises me is, that China is despised even by scientific men; and our letters find less favour in their eyes than the hieroglyphics of Egypt. Yet it would be sufficiently interesting to them to verify that our philosophical maxims preceded those of the great Greek masters; that our arts flourished at an epoch before Athens was founded, and that our principles of government were in vigour long before the Egyptian kings drew up their codes. These are subjects worthy of attention, and of at least as much interest as the study of the Chaldean inscriptions.

Having, nevertheless, resolved to study Western archæology, and to ascertain the opinion of the learned of Europe upon the origin of the world, I consulted the recognised authorities, but have learned nothing very definite upon the subject.

According to these sources of information, it would seem that the first man made his appearance upon the earth six thousand years ago; his wife gravely

compromised him in the esteem of his Creator, and their descendants became mere miserable wretches, the worthy objects of Divine vengeance—these descendants are the human race. This is the Western theory reduced to a simple expression: it proclaims a Creator—God; and a creature—man.

How arts and customs originated, and all the elements of social life; at what epoch society was organized—are questions upon which the most shadowy notions exist; and the facts even are denied by certain scientific men, who treat them as theoretical or imaginary. Whether these criticisms are founded, or not, whether they are the offspring of science or of prejudice, is not my object to inquire; but the Bible has for us one great merit—it is an ancient book, and an Eastern book. In this double point of view it is dear to us, and we shall see further on that our sacred history does not in some respects altogether differ from it.

The history of China comprises two great periods: that which extends from 1980 B.C. to the present day, called the 'official period;' and the other, going back into antiquity from 1980 B.C., called the 'prehistoric period.'

I will endeavour to give an abstract of this prehistoric period, which our books develop with great care, for it is the period of the birth of our civilization, and the introduction of social life.

History does not state how man came upon the

earth, but it states there was a first man. 'This man was placed between heaven and earth, and knew how far he was placed from each. He understood the principle of causality, and the existence of the elements. The germs of living creatures were formed.'

Popular imagination still represents this first man as endowed with great power, and holding in either hand the sun and moon.

Our sacred books—as may be seen by reading the text defining the nature of man—give an elevated idea of his origin, and proclaim the principle of personality. This creature placed between heaven and earth—that is, possessing a spirit in an earthly envelope—knows that it is neither God nor brute matter, but endowed with an intelligence to evoke the principle of causality, and surrounded by elements to aid the resources of his invention.

Such is the first man. At what period did he appear? Thousands of years back—an incalculable number. The history of this man and his descendants forms the prehistoric period elapsed within the limits of our empire.

The popular tradition placing the sun and moon in the hands of the first man will be remarked. The sun and moon symbolize with us the masculine and feminine, and from their union dates the era of suffering abandoned humanity. This tradition is not quite dissimilar from the text of the Bible, and

has some analogy with the apple adventure in the earthly paradise. We represent the same catastrophe by the sudden collision of the masculine sun and feminine moon. This is, I imagine, an equally parabolical method of representing original sin, but rather more specified.

This preface of the history of man immediately precedes the narrative of their first essays of civilization—if by that word may be expressed the first steps of man upon the earth, and his first victories over ignorance.

The notion of a celestial providence watching over man, and causing his efforts to fructify, appears strongly implanted in our history, by the statement that men were governed by emperors of inspired wisdom, who were the founders of Chinese civilization. These emperors are considered sacred. History assigns them no certain date, but informs us what were their works.

The first emperor was called the Emperor of Heaven. He arranged the order of time, which he divided into ten celestial stems, and twelve terrestrial branches, the whole forming a cycle. This emperor lived eighteen thousand years. The second emperor was the Emperor of the Earth; he lived also eighteen thousand years: to him is attributed the division of the month into thirty days. The third emperor is the Emperor of Man. In his reign appear the first rudiments of social life. He divides

his territory into nine parts, and gives to each of them for chief one of the members of his family. History celebrates for the first time the beauties of nature and the softness of the climate. This reign had forty-five thousand five hundred years' duration.

Throughout these three reigns, embracing a period of eighty-one thousand years, there is mention neither of habitation nor garment. History says men lived in caverns, without fear of animals, and the idea of modesty was unknown to them.

By what occurrences was this state of things altered? History is silent. But we may remark the names of the three emperors comprehending three terms, Heaven, Earth, and Man, a gradation leading to the hypothesis of a progressive decadence in the condition of humanity.

It was in the reign of the fourth emperor, called the Emperor of Nests, that the struggle for existence really began.

Man seeks to defend himself against wild animals, and constructs wooden nests. He uses the skins of animals to cover himself, and the text distinguishes between the terms 'to cover,' and 'to clothe.'

Agriculture was still unknown.

The fifth emperor was the Emperor of Fire. It was he who by observation of natural phenomena discovered fire, and pointed out the means of procuring it. He taught man domestic life. To him are owed the institution of barter, and the invention

of knotted cords to fix the remembrance of important facts. Savage life had completely disappeared.

His successor, Fou-Hy, taught man fishing, hunting, and the breeding of domestic animals. He proclaimed the eight Diagrams—that is, the fundamental principles which gave birth to philosophy, containing in embryo every step of civilization. It was also during this reign that property was organized.

This great emperor, whom our books consider inspired by Providence to prepare the happiness of man, regulated the greater part of those institutions which to the present day constitute the manners and customs of China. He defined the four seasons and instituted the calendar. In his system the first day of the year was the first day of spring, nearly corresponding to the middle of the winter in the calendar used by the people of the West. The institution of marriage, with all its ceremonies, dates from that reign; the betrothal gift then consisted of skins of animals. He taught men to find their position on the earth by fixing the cardinal points. He invented also music by the vibration of cords.

The successor of Fou-Hy was Tcheng-Nung, or the Emperor of Agriculture. He studied the properties of plants, and taught the method of curing diseases. He undertook great canalizing works, deepened rivers, and checked the inroads of the sea. From his reign dates the emblem of the dragon now adorning the arms of the emperor. History men-

tions the apparition of this fantastic animal as a mysterious event, a kind of prodigy frequent enough in most of the traditions of antiquity.

The successor of Tcheng-Nung was the Yellow Emperor, who continued the work begun by his predecessors by inventing the observatory, windmills, costumes, furniture, the bow, carriages, ships, and money. He published a book of medicine. We there read, for the first time, the expression, 'to feel the pulse.' The value of objects was also regulated; thus it is said, 'Pearls are more precious than gold.' The wife of this emperor raised the first silk-worms.

Under this reign the administrative division of the empire was organized.

The union of eight neighbouring houses was called a well. Three wells formed a friend, and three friends a village. An under-prefecture comprised five villages; ten under-prefectures were a department; ten departments a district, and ten districts a province.

The first copper-mines were worked by the Yellow Emperor.

The reign of this emperor's successor bears a certain date: the year 2399 B.C.; and down to the year 1980 B.C., when the official period begins, the succeeding emperors are considered sacred. Until this date the imperial power was not hereditary. Each emperor, in the evening of his life, chose the

most worthy to succeed, and abdicated in his favour.

In the reign of the last sacred emperor—that is, about the year 2000 B.C.—history mentions great hydraulic works, accomplished during inundations which caused great disasters. This is the only occurrence of the kind bearing some analogy to the Deluge. It remains to be seen whether the dates agree: this is a question I will not undertake to resolve, and which moreover is not particularly interesting, since it has been proved the Deluge was not universal.

Such is a summary, rapidly sketched, of our mysterious annals. They do not possess the seductive interest of mythological fables, but simply narrate the commencement of the world's history, by gradually initiating us into the progress accomplished. It is primitive life.

We attach a great value to everything ancient, and among popular traditions which have resisted the assaults of time, none is more venerated than that teaching us that the work of civilization was inspired by Providence. We love to connect our institutions with a principle superior to mankind, as Moses brought down to his people the text of laws he had written from the dictation of God. The Christian world will not find our spiritualism too singular, since it is the basis of their own belief.

PROVERBS AND MAXIMS.

THERE are truths so precise and so completely exact that they are expressed in a peculiar form, to distinguish them from what we agree to call a thought. These truths are recognised as true by everybody—they are proverbial.

Proverbs are said to be the wisdom of nations. They have the rather unique privilege of never being contested. Proverbs are never modified and never changed, are always old and always new: they are all immortal.

I have been curious to know the proverbs of Western nations, and to find out those bearing an analogy to our own. Besides being a study from which I immediately derived great benefit, because proverbs are written in a simple and correct style, I at the same time gained an insight into the genius and morality of the race. I was delighted to find that in a great number of instances, countries diametrically opposed were marvellously agreed in describing all the caprices, fancies, and whimsicalities of the curious creature called man, so diverse, so manifold, and who nevertheless proves he is capable of constancy in one thing—his faults.

It is good sense which gives the stamp to a proverb. It does not appear far fetched; it is a real

truth. French proverbs seem to me to be good portly citizens, and not dandies. They speak in a correct concise language, without flowers of speech, and generally in a familiar, good-humoured tone. They are grandmothers' sayings, and more usually cheerful than sad.

In China, on the contrary, we sometimes give our proverbs embroidered robes, and they approach nearer to those philosophical truths which disquiet human nature. In that we are Orientals, and the Orient has always been the land of parables, seeking its text where it finds it, namely, in the book of Nature, which perhaps is not the worst.

Europeans have little connection with Nature, and their proverbs show it.

Happiness is a blessing desired also in the West, and it appears that European and Chinese have the same manner of expressing it. We say, 'Happy as a fish in the water.' There are plenty of formulas making happiness depend upon the accomplishment of duty or the moderation of desires, but these are formulas blown away by the wind.

The really true proverb is that declaring the happy life of a fish. He wants nothing. It is a principle universally acknowledged.

'Union constitutes strength,' says a proverb beloved by the Belgians; and the proverb is right, for union is a social perfection. But it is a perfection, and on this account it is rather unusual to

experience the exact truth of this proverb. It appears to me too ambitious. We are more modest and I think clearer in the expression of the same thought: 'A single bamboo does not make a raft.' That is an evident fact compelling recognition, and the moral lesson comes afterwards.

All the proverbs representing the exploitation of man by man, all the tricks of the fox and the folly of the goat, are nearly the same. We say, 'To beat the bushes for others;' that represents taking the chestnuts out of the fire. With us also, 'Everyone loves to talk of his trade,' an excusable fault that M. Josse has taken the trouble to turn into ridicule.

We have also the flock of Panurge—not that this Panurge himself is known to me, but his sheep resemble ours, and we have plenty of people who follow each other like sheep.

'The spirit is willing, the flesh is weak,' is a proverb that 'cries in the streets'—every street in the world. The one is more or less willing, the other more or less weak; it is a question of more or less.

We have in China 'Blind men climbing mountains to admire the view.' I have read in Juvenal that in his time there were eunuchs with mistresses. It is the same kind of affectation.

We are acquainted also with the frog who would like to eat a stork. This is a very near relative of

La Fontaine's frog. Frogs of this kind are found everywhere.

If you want advice, our proverbs are full of it: 'A great fortune is not worth a small daily income.' Is not this the same as the French proverb: 'Feu qui vaille est feu qui dure.'

'Speak not in the streets: there are ears under the pavement!' is another coincidence.

We have also our simpletons who make nets to catch the tempest. They would shake hands with those who want to catch the moon with their teeth.

I pass over numbers of good ones with which I might also institute comparisons; but the reader will do so more easily than I, and will become convinced by reading the chief proverbs used by popular good sense, that all these truths proceed from a principle against which the history of humanity vainly protests, that of the fraternity of souls. The Gospel has proclaimed this dogma; but we proclaimed it three thousand years before the Christian era, and our ancient books contain this article of faith: 'All men in the universe are brothers.'

Our common origin is easily perceived when we study all these sayings, which may be called the diagnostics of human nature. The fact that we admit all these formulas as true brings us to the conclusion that man does not change, expressed in this manner: 'Dynasties change, but not man's nature.'

Some of our proverbs assume an enigmatical form: they are like those devices inscribed on the shields of knights of old, whose meaning was sometimes not quite evident, perhaps as an excuse for not always acting up to them. A device, however, ought to be clear, since it expresses a principle of honour. A proverb has not the same aim. It passes from mouth to mouth along the crooked roads of tradition, and comes down to us anonymous, like those ancient coins whose effigy is half obliterated and recognised only by the learned from certain characteristic marks.

Proverbs are the relics of memory. Thus we may explain their conciseness and their enigmatical meaning. 'Warmth for all, cold for one's self,' is an ancient Chinese proverb, attracting the attention, and requiring the aid of reflection. It expresses the result of an experience sufficiently discouraging for those having at heart the happiness of humanity; but in spite of that, perfectly true. Benefactors, when they succeed, distribute their benefits to the world. If they fail, they alone support the consequences of their ill-success.

Proverbs are often comparisons taken from Nature. 'When the water gets low, the fish begin to show,' to indicate that hidden crime ends by being found out. 'Every blade of grass its drop of dew,' to represent the equitable liberality of Providence. We have even proverbial expressions resembling those

witty extravagances, for some time the delight of Paris, and called '*les combles*.' Wishing to describe the avidity of the miser, we say: 'To fall into the sea and grasp the foam.' Is that not a '*comble*'? I do not, however, claim priority of invention for my compatriots. I only wish to show there is nothing new under the sun.

Who would believe it? We have also our satirical remarks about mothers-in-law, for they exist everywhere. We show them little mercy. We say: 'The sky in springtime often resembles the looks of a mother-in-law.' Often! What irony in the word, and how natural it is!

We go even more deeply into this subject of domestic pin-pricks. 'An ugly daughter-in-law cannot hide her ugliness from her husband's parents.' This is a truth that will cause a smile to more than one mother-in-law, if they do me the honour to read my book; and they will say to themselves there exists a country where they are avenged.

I leave with regret these proverbs, among which I could point out numbers, proving that we know human nature. But it is not only in our proverbs we show it; we have also our 'maxims,' although the world has never heard tell of our Pascals or Rochefoucaulds. Far be it from me to defame those great thinkers; we have a great respect in China for those who make the world think their thoughts.

I have collected a few of these maxims, not all—I

should fill volumes—but only those known in the 'society where one is bored,' since the society of the learned is thus defined so—wittily.

I quote them in the order they present themselves to my memory, and there is more than one among them that will please:

Life has its destiny; fortune depends on Providence.

Although the sea is wide, ships sometimes meet.

It is easy to make a fortune; difficult to keep it.

Pure gold fears not the fire.

A good bee will not touch a faded flower.

An old man's life is like the flame of a candle in a draught.

However high the tree, the leaves fall to the ground.

The tree planted by chance often gives shade.

One must have suffered to understand others' sufferings.

The deeply rooted tree fears not the wind.

It is easy to raise a thousand soldiers, but hard to find a general.

Clothes ought to be new, men old.

Heaven never creates a mouth without the food to fill it, as the earth never grows a blade of grass without giving it a root.

The capital has many charms, but home has always its own.

Fidelity does not recoil from death.

Man is not always good, as the flower is not always beautiful.

We should not be the slaves of our children; they themselves will find their happiness later on.

True charity consists in sending fuel to the poor when it is cold, and not in making presents to the fortunate.

A child is brought up to be the support of old age, as a money-box is filled to supply future wants.

To learn the disposition, listen to the speech.

The gates of the law are always open, but those who have only right and no money need not enter.

After death the hands are empty.

Evil is evil, though it is done with the knowledge it may become known.

Good that is done with the thought that it will be known is not real good.

If you believe not in the gods, look at the lightning.

After good wine, sincere words.

Shame departs, debts remain.

When one is pressed for time, the horse seems to stand still.

Through the crevice of a door a man looks small.

The saddle reminds of the horse.

The hammer strikes the axe, and the axe strikes the wood.

Distant relations are not worth near neighbours.

A beggar does not climb upon a rotten plank.

Better to ask one's self than ask others.

The soft speech hides a cruel heart.

Ten rushlights are not worth a lamp.

After passing through trouble one becomes a man.

With a clear conscience we may walk in darkness.

Jewels are only beautiful when they are set, as the flower is lovely only when shown up by the leaves.

To correct anyone's failing is like trying to cure the leprosy.

A foolish husband dreads his wife; a prudent woman obeys her husband.

A good horse needs but one stroke, a wise man but one word.

A man need only correct himself as severely as he does others, and have the same indulgence for others as for himself.

It is not wine that makes the drunkard, but vice.

While men are prosperous they burn no incense; but when misfortune arrives they fall at the feet of Buddha.

What superiors do is always exaggerated by inferiors.

The more the talents are exercised the more they grow.

The error of a moment becomes the sorrow of a lifetime.

The torment of envy is like a grain of sand in the eye.

The wise man can adapt himself to circumstances, as water takes the shape of the vase that contains it.

These maxims have no known author; they live in memory, and often occur in conversation and writing. They are habits of the mind.

There are also others with an odour of realism inadmissible by delicate tastes, and which I pass over in silence. I have chosen those only which may be read in French, not knowing enough Latin to translate them, and brave—my own scruples.

But perhaps one day I may speak of them again, when I have studied Rabelais.

EDUCATION.

THE end I have proposed to myself has been to make the character of Chinese civilization known in its primitive state, and to establish its originality. Everyone has seen those concentric carved ivory balls, which astonish by the delicacy of their execution. They are the product of skilful patience directing a curved steel point in the interior of an ivory sphere, and there cutting out by ingenious manipulation those little concentric balls, which are afterwards adorned upon the surface with various designs. These needle sculptures

in a substance as hard as ivory give an idea of our genius. We proceed with order and deliberation, and what we do we endeavour to do well, by means of method and patience.

Education has a supreme influence upon the destinies of a State; on its organization depend the grandeur and prosperity of a society. Our Government early understood the necessity of spreading instruction throughout the empire: and in a work written before the Christian era, mention is made of the '*ancient* system of instruction,' in virtue of which every town and village had to be provided with a common school.

In the genius of our institutions, the end pursued in making instruction general is to diffuse science among the masses, in order to bring forward true talent, and make it serviceable to the State.

We in no way conceal that tendency of our methods; for we only understand that kind of education which may be transformed into real service, to the profit of all.

Our systems of instruction are therefore very different from those in vogue in the West, where the name is more important than the object itself. Compulsory instruction only strives after effect: it is not a system of education.

It is imagined that by diffusing a certain dose of education, everything has been done for a people's happiness; but instruction without a system of edu-

cation is a dead letter. It is a stream without depth; it neither matures the judgment nor develops the nature.

According to the Chinese method, the obligation lies in the method of instruction. The State takes heed of nothing further.

Before making learned men, which always happens soon enough, it wishes to make good instruments of work: for it is not enough to be apt to learn, it is necessary to know how, and be able to learn.

I have noticed that in Europe the State is more particularly preoccupied with making programmes than in teaching methods. I confess this appears to me logically faulty, and there are many chances that instruction thus presented, whatever the spirit of it may be, will bear but little fruit.

Only the spirit of the instruction is in truth attended to, and it is considered satisfactory, and the end attained, if the masters leave off drawing their examples from religious morality, and select them from a manual of Positivist philosophy. In fact, the Government concerns itself in the system of instruction with a certain number of details which concern opinions, and the system is imagined to be perfect if it contains some of the high-sounding fashionable phrases.

These differences of appreciation upon a subject so important as education, show clearly the distance separating European civilization from ours. Our

institutions have been formed to wear, and last, as we may see by reflecting with what careful wisdom they have been established. By studying them we may perceive what renders other institutions defective.

In education our rules are of two kinds: those intended for children, and those for students.

The rules defining the instruction of children are contained in one of the sixteen discourses of the Emperor Yong-Tching, called the Holy Edict, in which are found the ideas that should animate the conduct of parents and masters in the direction of a child's intelligence.

With what authority the Emperor counsels parents to accustom their children from an early age to take a serious view of things, to point out to them principles rather than circumstances, laws rather than facts, and to prepare their minds to acquire the precious quality of attention! All the efforts of education during the earliest age should tend to cultivate the attention and fight against habits. Among the latter the Emperor instances: 'The habit of repeating with the lips, while the heart (mind) is fixed on something else.' He advises that children should be taught not to be too easily satisfied, but to ask questions, so that they may acquire the wish to know.

Then the Emperor teaches parents what they should do to direct this education, to be obeyed by

their children, and rule them wisely until the age when studies will begin to have an object.

The first thought that should occupy a student's mind is this, 'To form a resolution.' It is admitted that when a resolution is firmly made, the desired end will be attained.

I know no principle more efficacious than this: to make success in studies depend on the will alone joined to perseverance! such principles not only direct the efforts but prepare the character.

The advice we are to follow possesses also great value from the point of view of study in itself, and I offer it to the attention of all students who desire to attain success with certainty:

To analyze the work done every day.

To repeat every ten or twenty days what has previously been acquired.

To begin study at five o'clock in the morning, and give as much attention to it as a general gives to the operations of his army.

Not upon any pretext to cease study for five or six days.

Not to fear being slow; but only to fear stopping.

And finally, one last warning:

Time passes with the swiftness of an arrow; a month is gone in a twinkling, another follows it, and presently the year is finished.

I think I should not easily be persuaded that this method is not good, and that it is preferable to leave

the intelligence to its own initiative. Certainly there may be exceptional minds which have no need to be directed; but they are exceptional. It is the direction of ordinary minds that methods ought to have in view, and for these we must proceed with order, patience, and clearness.

I am persuaded that all those who are successful do not owe their success to the spirit of their instruction, but to the method they have followed. For this reason our legislators have preferred to institute precepts which lead to success.

This is not all: not only have they taught the best means of instruction, but they have made education obligatory by the simple fact that parents are responsible for their children, and that they are rewarded or punished by the State according to the manner in which they bring up their children. It is easy to understand with what force such a system acts upon education.

Our language is full of proverbial expressions alluding to the excellence of education: 'Bend the mulberry-tree while it is young;' 'If education is not diffused in families, how will men capable of governing be produced?' It is with a sentiment of legitimate pride I testify to the enormous number of men in our vast empire capable of reading and writing: nearly all the inhabitants of China are instructed!

And yet they live in concord. Ah, that is one of

our claims to glory! As we have not made use of gunpowder to blow up the world, neither have we abused the printing press by corrupting minds, and exciting useless desires. Education of this nature would not be comprehended in China. The books that are classical—that is, obligatory, the study and knowledge of which lead to honour and fortune—speak only of the direction of the mind, the duties of each of us in various situations; in a word, education teaches us first of all to live rationally; to put ourselves in the right path; to remember what we are, and what we shall be if we maintain ourselves in respect.

To express all my thought, I will say that our children are what these same children would be in the Christian world, if education consisted in learning, under the direction of responsible parents, the Gospel, the sacred books, history, the works of the great writers of old, and poetry. That is a comparison proving—from the fact that our community is prosperous—that in education everything depends upon example, in the same manner as in making a good draughtsman, all depends upon the model. In education the model is example, and is not a model a perfect thing?

You must then necessarily have an invariable, absolute logic, otherwise the system has no centre of gravity, and you run the chances of instability. Human nature is an organism of such sensitiveness

—we call it in China a little world—that it must be well understood before it is subjected to treatment. Now certainly it is better—a million times better—that human nature should be rough-hewn and ignorant than badly taught, I should say badly educated.

If there are any who think differently I regret it: and as for socialism, since there must necessarily be a socialism of some sort, I infinitely prefer the State socialism which regulates everything under the protection of public opinion, than the socialism of irregular caprices leading only to anarchy.

As one of our proverbs has it: 'It is better to be a dog and live in peace, than a man and live in anarchy.'

THE WORSHIP OF ANCESTORS.

AMONG the beliefs dearest to the hearts of the Chinese, that relating to the worship of ancestors must be placed in the forefront.

To worship ancestors and pay them honour is a duty as important as that of prayer among Christians, and there is none greater nor more popular.

Every family honours its ancestors. Their names are inscribed upon tablets, which also make mention of the services rendered by each and the titles

obtained in their lifetime. These tablets are placed in the order of filiation so as to represent a sort of genealogical tree, and if in accordance with the fortune of the family, the ancestral monument may have the magnificent proportions of a temple, where the soul of the family dwells eternally like a sacred fire. This temple is the abode of the ancestors, and it is here at fixed epochs that all the members of the family assemble to honour those who are no more, and pay their memory the homage of recollection.

This worship exists throughout China, in the humblest houses, as in the most opulent. It constitutes the very honour of the family.

I feel a certain diffidence in publishing and eulogizing these customs in European society, where they are absolutely opposed to the idea entertained of ancestors; and I ought to ask pardon for the boldness of our opinion relative to the constitution of the family, which is considered as being formed both of its living members, and the souls of those who are dead.

Death does not break the bond of family affection; it in some sort deifies it, and makes it sacred. The dead are not forgotten.

Forgetfulness of the dead is a rule in the West. Few are the exceptions; and beyond some families which preserve the memory of those who have illustrated their name in great offices of State—vanity it is miscalled, but noble pride is a juster term—

nothing is generally known of ancestors beyond three generations. The great-grandfather is the *x* of the family, and as to grandmothers, the obscurity in which they are enveloped is deeper still.

I have heard this subject treated with a coolness most interesting. It is a most noteworthy phase of the history of modern civilization, which wears out everything, consumes everything, ridicules everything—with a remnant of Chinese simplicity, I was going to say even everything sacred.

Ancestors in France are called *les vieux*, and a meaning not in the dictionary is given to the word. Poor *old ones* in truth, less valued than the old tapestry decorating the sumptuous staircases of new mansions; whose memory is less worth than a worm-eaten chest or a piece of cracked china, and whose half-obliterated names upon their tombstones are recognised by nobody. They are gone into oblivion.

I have visited the cemeteries—these cities of the dead, melancholy as places accursed. The *immortelles*, blackened with age, litter the old tombs to which fresh flowers are unknown. Ah, I detest these *immortelles*, these never-fading flowers, without freshness or perfume, that symbolize the hypocrisy of remembrance. They save the trouble of coming again. As for roses, they live but the space of a morning.

We carry our dead into the fields, upon the hills

that surround our cities, as high, as near to heaven as we can; and the tombs we raise to the memory of our *vieux* remain for ever in the midst of immortal Nature. The dead rest in peace!

Nevertheless, I have read that the dead are honoured in the West. Yes, it is true; I have seen grand funerals and magnificent mourning. I have seen on the day of the *fête des morts* a crowd gathered in the cemeteries; but how few are the living beside the great crowd of dead whose memory is no more! Does the respect paid to the dead extend beyond the end of the year? It is doubtful.

The ceremonies connected with ancestral worship take place in China every year, in the spring and autumn. These ceremonies have gratitude for their particular characteristic, and are carried out with great solemnity. The anniversaries are the occasion of family reunions, and would be of value by that happy influence alone.

In wealthy families the ancestral temple is large enough to contain apartments, where members of the family not residing in the same town may be received. One may even see tables laid out for school purposes, and as the temples are usually built in the country, they sometimes during the summer answer the purpose of pleasure villas. In numerous families assemblies in these temples are very frequent; for instance, on the occasion of marriages, and at the period of examinations.

All family festivals are held in presence of the family, that is, in the midst of its ancestors, and at their house. They are absentees who are not forgotten.

These usages are the same in every province of China. In every village, where nearly all the inhabitants are relations, may be seen a chapel dedicated to the ancestors. It is our parish church.

The Emperor honours a functionary who has fulfilled with devotion and intelligence the high charges confided to him during his lifetime, not by raising a statue to him, but a temple in which his posterity will celebrate the ancestral cult. At the anniversaries these ceremonies take place not only in presence of the members of the family, but the Emperor sends delegates to represent him. The temple is inscribed with the name and titles of the deceased, and recalls the eminent services he has rendered to the State.

This honour is but rarely accorded. It is the marshal's baton of the family.

THE INSTITUTION OF 'LA SAINTE ENFANCE.'

A SAYING celebrated in Europe praises the art of lying: 'Keep on lying; some of it will stick.' There can be no better proof of the truth of this principle than the opinion which has grown up in France concerning the fate of certain little Chinese, whom it appears their cruel parents throw upon the rubbish-heap, and abandon to the voracity of domestic animals.

In itself this institution of La Sainte Enfance is of so touching a character, when the halfpence of happy childhood are collected to administer to the needs of a childhood that is miserable—those halfpence intended for useless sweetmeats, and destined to be changed to a treasure—that one can hardly help admiring and believing in the fable. These poor little Chinese thrown . . . What perfidious imagination could invent such an infamous story?

Of course in many minds this belief no longer remains, for numbers of travellers who have visited these countries of the far East have contradicted the shameful calumny; but the institution continues to prosper, and it might be imagined that the object of it exists.

It has happened to me personally in Paris to hear

an old lady behind me saying, as she pointed me out: 'There's a Chinaman; who knows whether it is not my halfpence that have bought him?' Fortunately for me, she had not her title-deeds quite in order, otherwise I might have had to pay her interest on her halfpence. Ought not every good *action** to be profitable?

However, I made a mental note of the remark, and remembered it; one is not always so fortunate.

It is certain that parental love is the same throughout the universe. That love is innate, and the Chinese are no exception to the rule. There are unnatural creatures who in a moment of desperation, or to hide a misfortune, abandon a poor little newly born creature; but it is a crime punished by every code of law, and is as frequent in Europe as in China. Misery and vice lead to the same consequences.

It is said the abandonment of children in China is explained by their great numbers, and the privation of their parents. This argument is essentially false; the privation is not so great as people wish to make out, and numerous means exist to protect childhood from want.

In the first place, the laws punish infanticide the

* As Colonel Tcheng's pun is lost in translation, the reader may be reminded that *action* in French, in addition to its obvious meaning, possesses that of a share in a joint-stock undertaking.

same as murder of near relations; and in addition to this, the State subsidizes public foundling establishments. There are, besides, benevolent institutions, founded by private persons, in which abandoned children find asylum and protection.

Not only have these establishments a special object defined in the regulations, but these same regulations award recompenses to midwives who bring in a foundling, or denounce a case of infanticide.

The text of our laws is extremely severe, and when such a crime has been committed, not only the perpetrators are punished, but even the head of the family and the neighbours, the former as responsible, the latter as accomplices.

As I have shown in the preceding chapters, the increase of family is not considered a misfortune. The male children are the honour of a family, inasmuch as by them it is continued.

It is rare to hear of infanticide in towns, where the means of existence are more abundant than in the country. But in the latter, certain customs exist by which the bringing up of children, especially of girls, is promoted. In every family, so soon as a male child is born, the custom is to choose the girl who will one day be his wife. A little girl is selected in a neighbouring family, who is brought up at the same time as her future husband, and in the same house. She is educated as if she belonged to the family.

There exists also for poor parents another means

of escaping privation, and protecting the existence of their female children; this is, the sale of the child to a rich family, in which it will become a servant.

This word 'sale' shocks delicate ears, and seems to have some taint of slavery; but we must not be alarmed at words. The children sold are brought up by the family that buys them, and employs them, until their majority, in its service. They are then dowried, and afterwards married, and become free. These women who have been purchased children are able to receive every right that maternity confers, and their origin is not a humiliating stain.

These are usages we must accept without blame, since they come to the assistance of too numerous families, and even promote their increase.

There are great numbers of families who keep all their children at home, and lavish the tenderest care upon them. The mother, working in the fields, carries two while she bends painfully over the earth. They are fastened, one upon her shoulders, the other in the folds of her robe, and smile at the birds flitting around them, while the poor mother pursues her toilsome task.

In the floating towns I have even seen children fastened in baskets, awaiting their mother's return. Alas! poverty has its dangers; but why should it not also have its devoted love equally with riches, to which everything is easy?

The missionaries have founded hospitals and schools with the sums arising from the harvest of halfpence. These establishments are of great service to the poor, and I have no intention of criticising a work that does good.

THE WORKING CLASSES.

I HAVE sought in the most recent works upon China, what impression the organization of the working-classes had made upon the minds of European travellers.

In treating of this subject myself, I should have feared to be considered an optimist—seeing everything from the depths of his easy-chair, and to some extent estimating the happiness of humanity according to his own; as generally happens to those who write about the poor. They always arrive at one of two conclusions: either that the poor are poor by their own fault, and are therefore unworthy of pity, or that they are the happiest beings in creation.

Probably I should not have escaped that criticism.

I have therefore had recourse to books written by those who have seen: they are Europeans—English and French—and I will ask my readers to be satisfied with the information contained in the narratives of these travellers.

I read in the work of Mr. J. Thompson, published in French (by Hachette), in 1877, at Paris, the following description of the condition of the working-classes at Canton:

'In spite of its terrible exigencies, work has moments of interruption, even for the poorest labourer. Then, sitting on a bench, or simply upon the ground, he smokes and gossips quietly with his neighbours, without feeling the least constraint in the presence of his excellent employer, who seems to find elements of prosperity in the smiles and contentment of his workmen.

'In passing through these workmen's districts, it is easy to understand how in reality this great town is much more populous than would at first be supposed. The greater number of workshops are also kitchen, dining-room, and bedroom, to the workmen who occupy them. It is there, upon their benches, the workmen breakfast, and there upon the same benches they sleep at night. There, likewise, they keep all their possessions. A spare jacket, a pipe, a few ornaments they wear by turns, and a couple of small sticks of wood or ivory. But of all their treasures, the most valuable they carry with them consists in a good stock of health, and a contented heart. The Chinese workman is satisfied if he escapes the pangs of hunger, and if he has sufficient health to allow him simply to live and enjoy life in a country so perfect,

that the mere fact of living in it constitutes true happiness.

'China, in his idea, is a country where everything is established and ordered by men who know exactly what they ought to know, and who are paid to prevent people from creating a disturbance by ambitiously seeking to quit the condition Providence has placed them in. It will be said, perhaps, that a Chinese is ambitious; and in one sense this is true. Parents are ambitious to have their children well instructed and capable of presenting themselves at the examinations established by the Government to test candidates for public functions; and there are no people in the world who more ardently covet power, fortune, and place, than the Chinese who have passed their examinations with some success. This arises from the knowledge that there is no limit to the realization of their ambitious projects. The poorest of them can aspire to the highest functions of the Imperial Government.' (Page 225.)

Mr. Herbert A. Gille, attaché to the British Consulate, published in 1876 (Trübner and Co., London) a book, having for title 'Chinese Sketches.' There I find some passages I will take the liberty of quoting in their proper place.

The preface of this work contains the following opinion:

'It is generally believed the Chinese nation is a degraded and immoral race; that its people are ab-

solutely vicious, cruel, and in every way depraved; that opium, a scourge more terrible than gin, creates fearful ravages among them, which can only be checked by Christianity. A sojourn of eight years has taught me the Chinese are a people indefatigable in work, sober, and happy.'

In the same work, p. 12: 'The number of human beings suffering from cold and hunger is relatively far smaller than in England; and in this relation, which is of the greatest importance, it must be acknowledged also that the condition of women of the lower classes is far better than that of their European sisters. Wife-beating is unknown; she is subjected to no bad treatment, and it is even unusual to address a woman in that coarse manner not seldom heard in European countries.'

I could multiply these citations—I was going to say certificates—and extract from a good number of books proofs and curious details as to the condition of the working classes of China. It would be seen, for example, how cheap living is. With twopence daily a workman can live, and his wages are never less than tenpence. Generally in workmen's families the wife exercises a calling; either she carries on a little trade, or she works by the day in neighbouring houses. Even numerous families therefore can make a living.

In the provinces 'the struggle for existence' has numerous auxiliaries. The land is cultivated through-

out the whole extent of our vast empire, and field labours occupy a great part of the population.

All the cultivators are generally well off, whether they own the land, or only farm it. The land-tax is excessively small; it does not on the average represent tenpence per head, and it is customary for the farmer not to pay rent in bad seasons.

Here, however, is a narrative I read in the report of M. de la Vernède, already quoted, and which will terminate the demonstration I have hesitated to support with my own personal statements.

'We travelled over provinces, and saw an immense agglomeration of population arrived at such density that the earth, being in certain parts no longer sufficient, they build houses and cultivate gardens even upon rafts. We saw provinces of fifty thousand square kilometres, containing fifty millions of people, and admirably cultivated throughout their extent.

'In Petchili, for instance, landed property is excessively divided, and agricultural operations are carried out upon a small scale, but the intelligence with which they are directed prevents the grave inconveniences of minute subdivision.

'The farmhouses, shaded by great trees, seem like bouquets of flowers among vast fields of rich harvests. The abundance of hands, and the low price of labour, allow cultivation by alternate rows.

'The soil is admirably cultivated, and agriculture returns magnificent results.

'When one has explored the beautiful provinces of China, it is hard to prevent the mind from wandering to the unhappy lands of Asia Minor and Egypt. There the desert is the rule, and cultivation the exception. The farm always seems isolated, surrounded by uncultivated spaces.

'Travelling along the banks of the Yang-Tse-Kiang we saw clean and prosperous villages follow each other without interruption, and an active and laborious population showing by their faces and deportment they were contented with their lot. Descend the Nile a few kilometres; approach an important village: we perceive hundreds of heaps of greyish mud far from having the appearance of human habitations.

'What a difference between these and the pretty villages we passed through in Hupé, on the shores of Lake Poyang!

'Economical and sober, patient and active, honest and laborious, this Chinese people possesses a capability of work surpassing that of many Western nations. This is an important factor, which must not be neglected in questions of foreign policy.'

I have nothing to add to this testimony, and can but congratulate and thank their authors for having faithfully reported what they saw. The rarity of the occurrence makes it worthy of mention.

HISTORICAL SONGS.

THE poetical periods fixing the transformation of poetry in the various ages of our civilization bear a great analogy to those that literature has established in the West.

Poetry has been in China, as in Greece, the language of the gods. It was poetry that inculcated laws and maxims; it was by the harmony of its lines that traditions were handed down, at a time when memory had to supply the place of writing, and it was the first language of wisdom and of inspiration.

The poetical pieces which have been collected in the 'Book of Verses' relate, as I have already said, to that first period of our literature in which poetry was not, properly speaking, a luxurious art. It was only later that poetical taste began to infuse itself into our literature, and the intellect endeavoured to express the sentiments of the soul in a poetical form.

Our poets, those whose masterpieces are our models, have not retained the metre of the historical poems, the lines of which had but four feet. The prosodical system we now use has lines of five and seven feet. In our poetry the foot is equal to a word.

Besides this change in the structure of the line,

inspiration abandoned its antique simplicity. From religious and moral, it became sentimental and descriptive, and expressed all the passions of the heart at the same time as the sentiments.

Love and its deceptions, sadness and its melancholy thoughts, the pangs of misfortune, are the subjects most often chosen by the poets for allegorical treatment. There are others who, on the contrary, describe the happiness of country life, the beauties of nature, and the pleasures of friendship. These are, as may be seen, the habits of the Muse, oftener sad than gay, the same in every clime.

Chinese poetry admits rhyme, but it occurs only in alternate lines. Thus, in a stanza of four lines there are two rhymes—at the second line and the fourth. Our poets also use pretty often a particular form which is called parallelism, and consists in the correspondence of one line with another, or in the opposition of words expressing two contrary sentiments. These forms are very expressive.

China has had, like other nations, its poetical epochs. We have had prolific ages in which the muse has produced numerous masterpieces. We compare the progress of the poetical genius to the growth of a tree; 'The ancient "Book of Verses" is the root; the buds appeared in the reign of Hou-ti; in the time of Kien-Ngan there was a great plenty of leaves; and lastly, under the Thang dynasty, the tree furnished a grateful shade and

superb crops of flowers and fruit.' This glorious age of Chinese poetry corresponds to the eighth century of the Christian era, eleven hundred years back!

I propose in the present chapter, and one of the following, to pass these various periods shortly in review; I will quote a few works chosen here and there from our anthology, those which seem to me to give the best idea of the genius of our poetry in its different varieties.

The 'Book of Verses,' or Historical Songs, is a collection of odes, all of which are anterior to the seventh century B.C.; they were sung in town and country, as was the case in the Greece of Homer's period.

The style of these odes is characterized by great simplicity, and at the same time variety. They represent the archaic manners of China with all the natural simplicity of the earliest ages. They display no ornaments of style, artfully prepared to enrich the idea; art is not yet artistic, and is ignorant of the luxury of gorgeous draperies; it is uncut, but still a diamond. I will now give an example:

'I climbed the barren mountain,
And looked where dwells my father;
I thought I heard him sigh:
My son serves in the army,
Day and night;
But he is prudent, he may still
Return, and not be detained.

'I climbed the verdant mountain,
And looked where dwells my mother;
I thought I heard her sigh:
My young son serves in the army,
And must sleep neither day nor night;
But he is prudent, he may still
Return, and not leave his bones there.

'I climbed the mountain to the top,
And looked where dwells my brother;
I thought I heard him sigh:
My young brother serves in the army,
Day and night with his comrades;
But he is prudent, he may still
Return, and not perish there.'

I have purposely given almost a literal translation of this little piece, to give a better idea of its child-like simplicity. It is not ambitious; a young soldier is thinking of the beings dearest to him in the world: his father, his mother, his eldest brother. The order in which the thought is presented reveals the family organization in antique times; it comprises three terms: the father, the mother, and the eldest brother. The father and mother are recognised by the nature of the feelings distinguishing man from woman. The poor mother is thinking that her son is unable to sleep: the father thinks not of that: his son is a soldier, and if he is prudent he may return. The eldest brother sees the camp-life and the comrades, and if the soldier must die, does not, like the mother, wish he may return to die in his arms. These are

true and natural feelings, and what impresses the mind is that they will always be so.

How different are the warlike poems of Greece, sounding with the clang of armed conflict! Warlike ruses, party hatred, rage, vengeance, and the horrors of pillage successively inspire the poet's genius. Fatherland, home, and family are abandoned for endless sieges, voyages without object, and the most perilous adventures. In all our odes breathes love of peace, and family union seems essentially connected with our manners.

We may remark also the part played by the eldest brother in the preceding ode, and remember that the Bible also speaks in the same way of the eldest brother, and of his authority. The right of primogeniture in ancient society is as if the eldest alone represented the family. It is a trait of manners preserved in the traditions of the human race, and which it can never be without interest to find so clearly characterized.

The 'Book of Verses' includes a whole chapter of simple poems, in which we may trace the exact nature of the civilization of ancient times. They lay bare to us not only thoughts and sentiments, but also customs and institutions. Each of these odes is a picture in which are represented living beings; we seem to see and hear them; each has his appointed place. It is not a world disinterred from its ruins, like the memories of Pompeii or Herculaneum;

it is not a series of obscure inscriptions vainly pored over by the learned; no, it is life itself, it is movement and colour.

These odes have therefore a great charm for us Chinese; we love to sing them like sacred texts, for they fortify all our aspirations: love of peace, of work, and of family; respect for absolute power, deference to elders. It is these models that have formed our national character.

In these odes we find pieces celebrating conjugal fidelity and connubial love. They characterize a trait of manners which I will cite out of respect for that ancient tradition:

'Outside the city gate to the East
We see many handsome women,
Graceful as clouds.
But be they graceful as clouds,
I think not of them:
With her white robe and simple dress,
I love my wife best!

'Around the city walls
We see lithe and graceful women,
Looking like flowers of the fields.
But be they like flowers of the fields,
They attract not my love:
With her white robe and rosy cheek,
My wife is my only joy!'

The rhyme is not rich, and the style is old; but is it not a charming expression of pure and natural passion? It only wants the '*J'aime mieux ma mie, au gué,*' to make it a song of King Henri.

These odes are some of the oldest in the 'Book of Verses.' As they were collected by Confucius in the seventh century B.C., and came directly from tradition, it is not easy to assign them a date.

Some of them, however, go back to the Chang dynasty, whose founder preceded Sesostris. Others are relatively very recent, although anterior to the age of Confucius, and in them sentimental poetry begins to make its appearance. These pieces are elegies rather than songs; I have selected a few as a sample:

SIGHS.

'I took my pine-built bark,
And drifted down the stream;
Mine eyes remained unclosed all night;
My heart seems full of secret grief.

'My heart is not a mirror,
That I might see what it feels:
My brothers, although they support me not,
Are angry if I speak of my sadness.

'My heart is not like stone,
To be shaped and cut at will;
It is not like a blind,
To be drawn up and down:
It is full of truth and honesty;
I cannot direct it at will.

'My sadness is so great!
Nearly all are jealous of me;
Many calumnies attack me;
And scoffing spares me not.
Yet what harm have I done?
I can show a clear conscience.

'The sun is ever radiant,
But the moon is less each day.
Why are these changes?
My heart seems so full,
Like a useless unclean rag.
Ah! when I muse in silence,
I grieve I am not blown away!'

THE ABSENT ONE.

'The moon is high and clear;
My lamp is just put out. . . .
A thousand thoughts mingle in my heart,
My sad eyes are filled with tears;
But that which makes my grief sharper
Is that you will not know it!'

LOVE.

'A pretty and virtuous young girl
Has given me an appointment
At the foot of the rampart.
I love her, but she delays coming;
I doubt whether to return, and I am impatient!

'That young girl is truly beautiful!
'Tis she who has given me this jewel
Of red jade.
But this jewel of red jade that seems to burn
Increases my love.

'She has gathered, to give to me,
A flower lovely and rare;
But what makes the flower far more lovely
Is that it was given me by the young girl.'

All these poems are imbued with a charmingly delicate sentiment. Why can I not translate the harmony of our lines!

PLEASURES.

ONE of the numerous questions most often asked me is to know whether we amuse ourselves in China, and how we amuse ourselves. If people are amused, then of course the country is delightful!

To amuse one's self! What a civilized expression, and how difficult to translate!

One day I answered a witty lady, who unconsciously posed me with that same old question: 'What is being amused?' She thought I was trying to puzzle her, but replied immediately, 'What you are doing now, for instance: are you amusing yourself?' I was puzzled in my turn, or at least I thought so. 'Yes, certainly,' I rejoined; 'that then is what you mean by being amused?' 'Of course. Now,' she added, with a charming smile, 'do you amuse yourselves in China?' I was obliged to confess we did not amuse ourselves in the same way.

At the same time, when one is not destitute of wit, or at all events of good-humour, there is amusement, and plenty of it. The sparkle of intellect plays the most important part in our pleasures. Naturally there are accessories to excite, and give it wings; but intellectual vivacity itself is the great organizer of our amusements.

Our outdoor life is not organized in European fashion. We do not seek solace and amusement away from our homes. Chinese who are tolerably wealthy are established in such a style as not to need those factitious pleasures which in fact are a confession of boredom. They anticipate the possible occurrence of ennui, and provide against it. They do not consider cafés and other public places absolutely necessary to pass the time agreeably. They give their dwellings all the comfort a man of taste can desire, gardens to walk in, summer-houses for shade, and flowers to charm the senses. Indoors everything is adapted for family life: usually the same roof shelters several generations. The children grow up, and as we marry very young, we are serious at an early age.

Our thoughts are directed to useful amusements, to study and conversation, and our opportunities of meeting are so numerous.

Festivals are greatly in honour, and they are celebrated with great spirit. In the first place come birthdays, and in families they come frequently. These fêtes consist chiefly in banquets; presents are offered to the person honoured; it is a series of charming reunions.

We have also the great popular festivals: that of the New Year puts everybody in motion. The Feasts of Lanterns, of Dragon-boats, and of Kites are popular festivals rather than amusements; but they are the

occasion of assemblies and family gatherings which occasion much animation.

The official festivals are not the only ones. Flowers to which certain allegorical powers are attributed have also their fêtes, and each flower has its anniversary. One family invites another to contemplate a moonlight scene, a prospect, or a rare flower. Nature always has her share in the festival, which ends with a banquet. The guests are also invited to compose verses which are the chronograms of the evening.

In the fine season many excursions are made, especially to the Buddhist monasteries, where every attraction is found: delightful mountain views, exquisite fruit, and the best tea. The Buddhist monks understand perfectly how to receive visitors and do the honours of their domains. These promenades, when they can be taken near town, are very frequent. Verses inspired by the occasion are nearly always brought back. It is our way of taking sketches.

When the district one inhabits is not favoured by nature, distant journeys are undertaken, either in boat or palanquin.

The mountains of Soochoo are as much frequented as the valleys of Interlaken, and at a certain period of the year the 'high life' of the district is gathered together there to admire the marvels of creation.

Journeys by water are also much appreciated. The boats performing this service are organized in

such a manner as to satisfy the most fastidious tourist. Good dinner, good bed, and the rest; the hours pass quickly, charmed now by the sounds of music, and now by the melodious murmur of the waves, to the accompaniment of sighing zephyrs. In the evening the deck and saloons are lighted up, and nothing is more poetical than these great shadows gliding over the water, with the sound of laughter in the night-silence.

Woman has not the same liberty of amusement as in Europe. She makes visits to her friends, and receives theirs in turn; but these reunions are not open to men. Thus one of the causes which excite and produce the pleasures of society—that is to say, the best part of the amusement—is suppressed in the organization of Chinese society.

Men frequently meet in parties, but they are unaccompanied, nor do they visit ladies outside the family circle.

The Chinese who are admitted into European society, and are present at soirées and fêtes, would show very bad taste in venturing to boast of their own customs in the organization of social relations. To speak the truth, one may compare institutions of a political character, but not social customs. They have the same privilege as tastes and colours.

'Everyone takes his pleasure where he finds it' is a perfectly true saying, which expresses my idea; for in that case it is always found when it is sought.

But it is also probable that our legislators, in diminishing as much as possible the number of occasions for men and women to meet, have acted in the interest of the family.

There is a Chinese proverb which says, 'In ten women there are nine jealous.' Nor are men perfect. Family concord is therefore subject to great danger.

I have already said the institutions of China have but one aim—the organization of social tranquillity, and to assure its realization the only infallible principle has been—to avoid giving opportunities. This is very practical. It may not display chivalric bravery, but then how many of the brave are overcome by temptation!

This matter is difficult to treat of on account of the very nature of the passions it brings upon the scene. It is, however, worthy of attention.

In marriage the remedy to situations *in extremis* is summary execution without form of process. It is the celebrated *tue-la*, so vivaciously commended by Alexandre Dumas *fils*. I should be the last to contest a husband's right at a moment when his dignity and authority are gravely compromised. But still, I think, with our sages, it is better to avoid this sort of *dénouement*, which poisons after existence, however just the punishment may have been; for in most cases you have loved the woman who deceived you, and painful memories are the result.

The remedy consisting in taking a lawyer and barrister and pleading in public a cause which ought to be kept like a secret, seems to me to offer but poor satisfaction. It is in a manner taking a diploma for the degree of *mari trompé;* and in no country has that ex-matrimonial situation ever excited compassion, much less respect.

There is nothing, therefore, but trouble and vexation in the institution of Western society as it exists. My personal experience in the matter, and what I have read, have quite opened my eyes. I do not, however, share the opinion of a large number of Frenchmen, who maintain that most wives deceive their husbands. That must be exaggeration, although I have been told by a lady that it was the luxury of marriage, and that men gradually resign themselves to their new existence. I am no longer surprised that marriages are becoming less in number; they will soon be nothing but a simple formality witnessed by notaries. This can hardly be called progress, but I agree it will be very amusing.

However this may be, the sacrifice we have imposed upon ourselves is worthy of having been made. It is, moreover, in conformity with our opinion of human nature. We consider that man is originally inclined to virtue, and is only perverted by bad example, by becoming soiled with what we call the dust of the world.

Confucius classes woman and wine among

dangerous things. Universal history proves him to be right. If a scandal of any kind occurs, the first idea is *cherchez la femme*. The West offers this remarkable peculiarity, that it presents not only the example but its criticism. Instruction is therefore easy. *Cherchez la femme* is a saying which would have no meaning in China. To understand it you must cross the Oural, and even draw nearer still to the West, where you will *find* the woman.

I am certain these observations have never been made respecting our manners, the taste being above all to criticize them, and to pronounce them Chinese; that is, extravagant. Their great defect, every sincere mind will agree, is that they are too reasonable. Old children are like the young ones—they don't like prizes for good conduct. That is the real character of Western society; they are ashamed of seeming good. They would like very well to be so, but they plume themselves upon seeming worse than they are for the sake of effect, and this amusement finally perverts; it is like playing with fire.

We have remained serious. . . . Ah, it is a terrible word, but he who desires the end must take the means, and if we have family happiness, it is because we have suppressed—temptations. Gaiety is a little the worse for it, but morality is maintained. And then after all it is so easy to travel; we have Europe at hand.

I would not, however, wish it to be imagined that

Chinese society, and above all our youth, are bound down by tyrannical customs.

Everyone knows the exceptions it is unnecessary to mention. But an exception has been stated by certain travellers, in the shape of those boats called flower-boats, found in the neighbourhood of great cities, and which have been represented as places of debauch. Nothing can be further from the truth.

The flower-boats no more deserve the name of ill-famed resorts than do the concert-rooms of Europe. If the frigate which rots in the Seine at the Pont Royal were taken down the river as far as the hills of Saint-Germain, and a festive appearance given to it, which it no longer possesses, it would be the same as a flower-boat.

It is one of the favourite pleasures of Chinese youth. Water-parties are got up, chiefly in the evening, in company with women who accept invitations. These women are unmarried; they are musicians, and it is for this reason they are invited to the flower-boats.

When you wish to organize a party, you find on board invitations ready prepared, upon which you write the name of the artist, your own, and the hour of assembly.

It is an agreeable way of passing the time when it is too slow. On the boats are found everything an epicure can desire; and in the cool of the evening, with a cup of deliciously perfumed tea, the

woman's harmonious voice and the sound of musical instruments are not considered a nocturnal debauch.

The invitations are only for the space of an hour. The time may be prolonged if the woman has no other engagement, and naturally the expense is doubled.

These women are not considered with relation to their moral conduct. In that respect they may be what they like—that is their business. They exercise the profession of musicians or lady companions; the name does not signify, and they are paid for their services as one pays a doctor or lawyer. They are usually educated, and some are pretty. When they unite beauty with talent, they are of course much sought after. The charm of their conversation becomes as much appreciated as that of their art, and is turned towards those numerous subjects one likes to hear a woman's judgment upon. Verses even are sent to those who can compose them, and there are some sufficiently instructed to answer the rhythmical gallantries of the literary.

As to pretending that these meetings are something different, and are the occasion of scenes of *cabinet particulier*, it is absolutely false. The foreigners who have reported these details have depicted what they hoped to see, in place of the serenades they could not understand.

The women musicians are often invited to the

house of the family. They come after dinner to perform music, as artists are invited in Europe to amuse the guests. If the musicians were women of immoral life they would not cross the threshold of our houses, and above all, would not appear in the presence of our wives.

These artists also receive at their own houses when asked. You invite them to receive you at their houses to dine. You order the dinner and ask your friends, who can also bring the persons they have engaged for the occasion. Soirées are thus organized.

The object of invitations may also be to attend a theatre; and it is not unusual in the evening to see around the theatre, especially at Shanghai, hundreds of sedan-chairs magnificently draped and perfumed. They are the chairs of the musicians invited to the theatre, awaiting their exit.

These customs show sufficiently well that the seductions of the fair are strongly appreciated in the Empire of the Centre, and it is not the inclination that is lacking.

The human heart is everywhere the same: it is only the way of controlling it that varies. Doubtless many a chance romance commences with an invitation. At first it is only a wish to hear music; but this music is so treacherous! Confucius also has placed it among the dangerous things: The sound of the voice remains in the memory; the invitations

are renewed; and he who invites may in his turn become not altogether an indifferent object. Then—

> '. . . l'herbe tendre, et je pense
> Quelque diable aussi le poussant ;'

a romance is begun, and matters go on in the East as they do in the West. It is very costly, but, however, will never be sufficiently so; for it is only pleasures that ruin that are truly agreeable.

I have mentioned men's reunions. I ought to remark that the subjects of conversation never touch upon politics.

Everything that might disturb a good understanding is carefully avoided. At the most the news of the day is discussed. Travels are talked over, and absent friends, whose verses and letters are produced and read. Playing upon words is also in vogue—a pastime to which our language, rich in monosyllables, is admirably adapted.

Antitheses are usually sought for, figurative expressions, oppositions of words or ideas. These amusements are very fashionable.

The ladies play cards and dominoes a great deal. They embroider admirably, but do not learn singing. They have the resource of conversation, a resource so precious to women; and it is needless to ask if we have Célimènes and Arsinoés. There is always a very much-appreciated male fellow-creature in the conversation of the fair sex. It is an irresistible

inclination, very much like instinct, and one which may be brought forward as evidence of the community of origin of the feminine species.

A pastime, which I think is not so general in Europe as in China, is that of which flowers and their cultivation are the motives. The women love flowers passionately, render them a veritable worship, idealize them, and draw the inspiration of sentimental poetry even from their scattered petals.

EUROPEAN SOCIETY.

THE essential difference characterizing European society, as compared with ours, is that the former is infinitely more exacting for everything constituting the organization of existence. Let us suppose Chinese society suddenly to become as difficult to satisfy as the Western world is pleased to be, and I have no doubt it would indulge in the same satisfactions. That seems clear.

But these transformations of taste are not produced suddenly, and nothing is harder to uproot than old custom. It must first fall into disuse, almost by itself, like a rotten rafter, and a new life must penetrate society. It is a slow, methodical work of substitution, which must proceed naturally, and requires the patient perseverance of time.

My compatriots and I, who have tasted of the fruit of the Western tree, know very well this fruit is of fine colour and flavour, and that Europe is an admirable portion of the globe to visit. But after all its satisfactions are only those appertaining to a life of pleasure, and end by wearying even the giddiest.

The European is above all things proud of his resources of amusement, and strangers must be imbued with a deep passion for serious things to be enabled to study in the midst of such various obstacles. The long sojourn I have made in the West has allowed me to live a society life as there understood—chiefly at Paris—whilst observing the programme of special studies laid down for us; and it is known we have done credit to our professors. I may therefore speak of my leisure moments like a student in the holidays, when he has finished his examinations.

It has always been said of the Chinese that they are suspicious. This word has many meanings, but is usually applied to us in an unfavourable sense. This is a mistake: it should be said we are practical—a quality that induces us to esteem the medium as being the index of the best. We do not understand exceptions. Now we have no difficulty in concluding that in European society one must either be very much amused or very much bored. There is no medium. I should like to call the Western

world the Empire of Extremes, in contrast to the Empire of the Centre. I beg pardon for the joke, but it expresses my thought.

This great civilization affords us nothing but surprises, instead of a uniform condition. It is not the smooth brilliant surface of an ingot of gold on leaving the crucible; it is an ore in which may be distinguished veins of pure gold, alloys, and dross that must be analyzed to find the gold-dust it contains. The splendours of luxury represent in our eyes only curiosities, and not real progress.

Thus, to give an example that may express my thought, it is the custom to say that England is a rich country because there are great fortunes in it. To my mind that is bad logic. You can only say it is a country rich in rich people. It is therefore an exceptional point of view. Nevertheless, speak of the English in France, you will always be told they are rich; it is a fixed idea. We need not therefore be surprised that there are so many fixed ideas upon the subject of China, when at only a few hours' distance the most self-evident propositions are distorted. It is the application of the formula: *ab uno disce omnes*—a formula which will always be in use, because time is lacking to discern the truth. The almost, the *à peu-près*, is amply sufficient; an observation is scribbled in a note-book, and a volume made of it. They call that assimilation.

I have been careful to note almost daily the

various incidents of my Parisian life, and I have taken it into my head to classify them by dividing them between two portfolios, the first of which bears the title, 'Notes of interrogation,' and the second, 'Notes of exclamation.' My readers will easily distinguish one from the other, and I shall avoid the tedium of seeming to be always asking questions or expressing astonishment.

I have mentioned the reasons which decided our legislators to separate the society of men from that of women. I have frequented in Europe, and especially at Paris, conversational societies, and they have particularly charmed me. Formerly, I am told, it was fashionable to go into intellectual society, and the *salons* were more sought after than at present. I have seen in those still remaining charming women, strongly attached to intellectual pleasures, adopting them sometimes from taste, and sometimes purposely to avenge themselves on politics which absorb their husbands, or as a diversion from the emptiness of the latter when it has become incurable.

Woman has always the intellectual advantage in the *salons* still worthy of the name, and perhaps this is the reason the latter have disappeared. The men, by no means flattered at having their insufficiency shown up, have ceased to appreciate this kind of assembly, where their intellectual infirmities generally served as a target; we must not blame

them too much. It is always excessively disagreeable to be classed among ninnies or naturals by a clever woman. What a marvellous thing is a woman's wit! It is indefinable; it is at the same time light of touch and profound in depth; it is truly delightful; and when two lovely eyes sparkle amidst the laughter of this fairy that is never still, but seems to flit everywhere like a butterfly in the sunshine, it is a perfection which leaves far away in oblivion the black coats and their affectations.

My profession of faith is very easy to make: it has woman's wit for an ideal. Ask me not which—there is no type to determine; I have sometimes met with it, and the effect was like a dazzling light.

I am a passionate admirer of wit. It is the only thing that distinguishes and suffices. One gets tired of everything except that. When it is exhausted in others, one keeps a small personal provision of it, and it consoles in the society of a pack of people who are incapable of entering into your feelings.

Wit is very aristocratic; it is indulgent to simple good sense which knows itself to be commonplace, but how it disdains that pedantic, parti-coloured, borrowed, ticketed wit, resembling a purchased coat-of-arms, or a foreign decoration emanating from some region known only to geographers! Women intuitively recognise wit when it is authentic, and were they consulted upon the choice of the Acade-

micians I should not have been surprised. To have the women's vote! What an honour to belong to so illustrious a society!

I have seen well-attended assemblies, but there seemed to be rather too much consciousness of being assembled. Everyone had been careful to furbish up his valuable intellect, and try his pinions. The impromptus were prepared beforehand, like soldiers at a review. These preparations are admirable in strategy, but when wit takes the field it ought to go across country! Nature is its best guide! How delightful not to know what you are going to say! It is like an excursion without a fixed object—whither you please: you are certain to see something you have not seen before—you are an explorer! But to prepare beforehand the surprises you intend to be surprised with, to hastily polish up a crib and offer it as an inspiration, is worthy of a mountebank.

Wit is only at ease when natural and unlooked for; it is the twin brother of Truth, that great unknown whom the Western nations have represented so seductive that they pass their time looking at and complimenting her.

I have never cared for mixed assemblies; they are become very fashionable, but they are a mistake. In a very distinguished *salon* of the Faubourg Saint-Germain I have seen assemblies of persons belonging to very different classes.

Everybody there had wit or a talent, and each was tuning up his instrument. One, a much admired professor, was giving definitions: it was a miniature edition of his class. After his enunciations the guests seemed to reflect a moment, and then there was a mingled murmur of 'Very good; very true.' One evening, I remember, a celebrated Academician was asked to define modesty; he replied that it arose from the feeling we had of our real worth. We all admired the justice and profundity of the idea.

In the assembly there was also an actor, who represented with immense assurance the wit of others. I was astounded to see this personage in the place of honour, and gentlemen and Academicians relegated to the other ranks. In China we observe a rigorous etiquette with regard to acquired social distinctions. I have been told etiquette in France is no longer good form: I have no difficulty in believing it.

The society of the Institute is very dignified. It is a body reminding me of our literary class: it forms, I believe, the only company whose credit is not depreciated. True, the conditions to be fulfilled before becoming a member are unchanged: to be the first of your order suffices. That alone explains the maintenance of prestige.

I greatly admire that institution which creates the aristocracy of science, and whose palms are

glorious. They are really the only distinctions a man can feel proud of possessing; they confer an honour that honours.

I have joyfully recognised among the usages of the Institute one that exists in China. The Academicians' wives wear as a privilege palms embroidered on their evening dresses, and thus receive the same ennoblement as their husbands. Chinese women, as I have already said, wear the insignia of their husbands' rank and assume their title. It is a custom that should be extended to many other elevated positions. Emulation would thereby be created, married women would highly appreciate the privilege, and many husbands would find it extremely salutary. It is quite right that a wife's ambition should give the husband a pretext to aspire; it is good also that a husband should have the satisfaction of ennobling his wife: these are little presents maintaining friendship, that rare flower of marriage, whose thorns do not always bear roses.

The wit of society appears to me overstrained, which I have not found to be the case in the society of wit. It is made up of trifles powerless to charm. It pleases at first sight, then it wearies. It is noise without harmony.

I have noticed that the good breeding of men in society is not invariable. In the presence of the lady of the house they are exquisitely polite, but scarcely are they out of her sight than they imagine

they are at a club, and become extremely common. In France I have heard the proper pride of rank criticized as *une pose*. Surely, however, one must be what one represents, otherwise it is no longer possible to agree upon the meaning of words.

Only the lowest class, the *canaille*, asserts its rank. That alone has preserved its pride, however it may inspire disgust. In our Oriental countries I have seen beggars with the air of exiled kings; in Italy I have met ancient Cæsars in ragged mantles. These fellows possessed a style perfectly inimitable. No doubt had they been compelled to put on a dress-coat they would quickly have lost that noble air which commands our unwilling respect.

Costume has a great influence upon manners, and it is one of the notes of interrogation most strongly underlined in my portfolio.

What reason could there have been for the suppression of those magnificent costumes which used to distinguish all classes and all ranks? Was it the idea of destroying social distinctions? I much fear it is distinction itself which has been the sufferer. Can a less harmonious sight be imagined than a gathering of black coats? Every time a lady has honoured us with an invitation to her house, she has not omitted to say: 'Be sure to come in your costume. Don't disguise yourselves in that horrible black coat our lords and masters wear! Don't follow our fashions!' And we have always been con-

gratulated upon the beauty of our costumes; praise has been given to the lustre of our colours, the richness of our silk, and the imposing elegance of the dress.

It is a most curious circumstance. Everybody seems to regret the disappearance of costumes, and nobody has the idea of reintroducing them. The only consolation is fancy-dress balls, one of the most delightful inventions in the way of society pleasures, and at the same time one of the most useful. There I have seen gentlemen of all the courts of bygone reigns, from the age of Francis I. to the last days of the monarchy in which begins the falling-off—of costume. It was really fairy-like, this lesson of general history. And how suddenly these men became noble, distinguished, self-contained, proud, as men ought to be!

I do not speak of the feminine sex, which, fortunately for modern society, has not left off its charming toilettes. Fashion often changes the styles but never destroys them, and sometimes resuscitates the ancient models without being criticized. Women would never have had the idea of adopting a society uniform. How have they been able to allow the men to do it? They like brilliant costumes, and would find pleasure in admiring them. This is a note of interrogation I have often placed before a fair friend, and one which has never been solved to my complete satisfaction. One lady, however, remarked

that a plain coat was much more convenient to—turn. She observed that formerly the costume designated a political party, and that if the fashion remained unchanged men would ruin themselves with dress. 'It is only since the French Revolution,' she added with a smile. 'Do you understand, Mr. Mandarin?' It was needless to ask. The reply was not without wit.

I have had the privilege of seeing great official balls, and of being present at the storming of the supper-tables. It is in the highest degree curious, and if I had not been aware of the manner in which great official society eats, I might have written upon my tablets under the heading *etiquette* the following note: 'The personages forming the highest class, when they are admitted to the presence of the Chief of the State, do not place themselves at table, but rush at it with warlike fury.' This, however, is the way Europeans take their notes in travelling. To mention but one instance of their culpable recklessness, they have copied the pictures representing the punishments suffered in the Buddhist hell, and given them to their public as a delineation of the tortures of our judicial system. It would be infamous if it were not grotesque! But I return to the famished crowd awaiting the opening of the doors. It is quite as grotesque, and I invite the partisans of the realistic school to turn their attention to this scene, which may be called the battle of black coats.

First the human torrent comes leaping over all obstacles, and filling every empty space; then by degrees becoming more closely packed together until it forms a solid mass—a veritable chaos of black shoulders surmounted by bald heads, encased in stiff collars. These heads wag with indescribable movements, showing the increased tightness of the squeeze. Then arms are raised, hands approach the goal, and succeed in seizing the delicate viands so greedily coveted, which at last arrive half crushed at the mouth of the happy victor. This first success increases the appetite.

This time the cup reaches the lips, and the mouth and pockets are simultaneously stuffed with delicacies usually only found together in the most secret recesses of the human stomach.

Such is the company seen from behind. Now let us observe it as it turns; for

> 'Ce n'est pas tout de boire
> Il faut sortir d'ici . . .'

and this is another sight quite as interesting as the first.

In the foreground still undulates the sea of black shoulders. These are they who have not yet had anything, but struggle still, and keep on pushing. Further on those who are fed, pressed against the tables, begin to execute a turning movement. Their imposing column sets itself in motion; they push,

they crush, they come forth from the battle, bruised, tumbled, crushed—but fed. I do not mention those who remain, for there are some whose appetite is such the servants have to ask them politely to make room for others.

I have never been to the ball without waiting to see this battle.

The non-official balls are society balls. But they are not so amusing; they are cold, formal, dull. It is most difficult to find simplicity and distinction in the same society. If you are not interested in dancing, you run a good chance of being bored. Have you noticed the indifferent manner of all this great society? It is sometimes icy. The dances are silent; a few groups talk in a low voice; the company comes and goes in and out, and disappears. They meet without seeming to know each other, scarcely shaking hands. Everybody seems preoccupied; usually they are looking for somebody who is not there. That is invariable; everyone has a person who has not come, and stays for the sake of an excuse. What a comedy is drawing-room society!

When by chance a personage is present, he is surrounded. A little court is represented, a pleasure the more appreciated because it has a slight air of conspiracy — authorized, like the lotteries. It is in this way governments who can wait are supported. It is inoffensive, and there is a certain style about it.

They imagine themselves dangerous! The only society completely to my taste is the art world, and I comprise under that name that privileged society where there are neither nobles, burgesses, magistrates, barristers, notaries, lawyers, placemen, merchants, bureaucrats, nor fundholders, but all are artists and satisfied with the title. To be an artist! it is the only thing for which one could desire to belong to European society.

I trust I may be pardoned this partiality; but really I cannot see what there is to admire in notaries or lawyers. We are more than four hundred millions in China, and dispense with them, and our title-deeds, contracts, settlements—in a word, every document relating to business, is not less regular on that account. My admiration for the artist class is without reserve, for they are the only men who have a lofty end in view; they live to think, to show man his greatness and spiritual nature. By turns they melt or kindle his heart, and awake his torpid faculties by creating for him works resplendent with an idea. Art ennobles all, elevates all. What matters the price paid for the work? Is it the number of bank-notes that excites the artist's passion, as it inflames the lawyer's zeal? No. The only thing that escapes the fascination of gold is art. Whatever the artist may be, he is essentially free, and therefore is alone worthy of esteem and honour.

The artist world comprises a great number of

artists of different classes, and the same social distinctions are there seen as in other societies. There are the favourites of inspiration. Art possesses, even in France—that fatherland of artists—its king, if by that title we may designate the greatest thinker. His poetic genius has greatly influenced his century, of which among so many other glorious names he will be the pride.

All those minds which strive to obtain a glimpse of light in the domain of the ideal belong to that society of independent men called artists. Their society is exclusive: it admits no sham brethren, and none can assume the title of artist without actually being one. It is a nobility that cannot be bought. I will further add, that all the artists of all countries extend their brotherly hands beyond the frontiers, and laugh at politicians who pretend to separate them. The human mind trained to the flights of inspiration is controlled neither by distances nor passports; the higher the soul soars the greater humanity grows, and the nearer its transfiguration into fraternity.

CLASSICAL POETRY.

IT was under the Thang dynasty (618 to 907 A.D.) that poetry in China attained its highest development. This great epoch has for us the same splendour as that which in the West radiates from the ages of Augustus and Louis XIV.—its masterpieces are imperishable.

I have collected a few pieces belonging to that poetical period, and here present them to my literary readers, with all the restrictions a translator has the privilege of making.

In poetry, above all, it is not sufficient to give the idea or the subject of the composition. The word itself has to be considered, the place it occupies, the force or movement it gives to a thought, and then the harmony of the line and verse. These latter are peculiarities impossible to translate.

Moreover, there is so wide a gulf between the languages of the West and ours! The forms of thought are so completely different. One must possess a large fund of good-will to translate Chinese poetry; and I only do it in deference to a frequently expressed wish, and to give an idea of our poetical works. My task has been simplified, happily for me, and happily also for the reader, by translations I have

selected from the learned work of the Marquis d'Hervey de Saint-Denys, member of the Institute. I have been careful to mark with an asterisk (*) the pieces extracted from that work; moreover, the reader will have no trouble in distinguishing the elegant translation of the Marquis d'Hervey from my humble effort, which is but a word-for-word rendering without ornament.

The first ages of the Thang period were under the influence of religion, and the earlier poets have aspirations belonging rather to religious philosophy than to sentimental poetry. I cite a few passages only, merely to give an idea of that epoch:

CONTEMPLATION. (*)

'The monk and I were united
In the same thoughts.
We had exhausted all that words can express,
We remained silent.
I looked at the flowers, motionless as we;
I listened to the birds flitting through space,
And I grasped the great truth.'

Here is another piece of the same kind:

THE CELL. (*)

'The pure light of a lovely morn
Lights up the old convent;
Already the sunlit tops of the great trees
Announce the sun's return.
It is by mysterious footpaths
We reach this solitary place,
Where the cell of the priest is hidden
Among verdure and flowers.'

As may be seen, these fragments are little else than themes of poetical inspiration. The profundity of thought displayed in the former of the two is worthy of notice; it breathes a pure spiritualism, and presents in a few words the solution of the highest questions of religious philosophy.

This period of religious poetry was not of long duration. It ended with the extinction of Buddhist influence, after which we find scepticism in the ascendant, and poetry inspired with ideas of doubt and depression:

(*) 'I fall into a profound reverie:
How long do youth and maturity last?
And what can we do against old age?'

These lines are by the greatest poet of China, Tou-Fou, surnamed the God of Verse. I will quote some of his works. They are usually imbued with melancholy ideas. In his poems he compares the future to a sea without an horizon. The sight of the ruins of an old palace moves him to sadness:

(*) 'I feel a profound sadness,
I sit upon the thick grass.
I begin a song to express my grief,
Tears rise and flow in streams. . . .
Alas! on this earthly path
That each treads in turn,
Who could walk for long?'

The poet Li-taï-pe, who belongs to the same period, is more philosophical; he consoles himself for the miseries of life:

(*) 'Listen, down there in the moonlight,
How the crouching ape weeps
All alone upon a tomb!
And now fill up my glass:
It is time to drink a bumper!'

The same poet shows us in the following piece that already in his time—that is, in the seventh century—the soldier was a favoured mortal:

(*) 'His whole life long he never opens a book.
He can hunt;
He is skilful, strong, and bold,
He gallops faster than his shadow,
What a proud, disdainful air!

* * * *

'How different are our bookworms
From these intrepid marchers;
They who grow grey over their books
Behind a drawn curtain—
And truly to what purpose?'

Among the elegiac poets Tsom-Ming-Tong stands out in bold relief; his muse, like that of Li-taï-pe, indulges in melancholy reflections, and then, doubtless in resignation, sings of wine and flowers:

(*) 'There is but one spring-time in each year!
And in a hundred years
How many men reach the age of a hundred?
How many times can we intoxicate ourselves
Among the flowers?
This wine should cost dear
Before we complained of the price!'

Nature has also her singers, and poetical descriptions of valleys and mountains are not lacking:

'The sun has crossed to its rest
The chain of high mountains;

Soon all the valleys are lost
In the shades of eve.
The moon rises among the pines,
Bringing coolness.
The wind that blows and brook that flows
Fill my ears with enchantment.'

Elsewhere we find poetry in which the joys of friendship are contrasted with the grief of separation :

'Let us think only of tuning our lutes,
While we are united
In this happy dwelling !
I will remember the journey that awaits me
Only at the moment we must part,
When the bright moon will have sunk
Behind the tall trees !'

Exile is a cruel pang to a Chinese. Unfortunate poets, victims of some palace revolution, have depicted all its sadness in admirable verses :

'Before my eyes unceasing pass
New peoples and rivers.
But alas ! my poor village
Is lost to view !
While the great river Kiang
Rolls its swift waves towards the East,
The days of exile grow longer
And seem without movement.'

This fragment is by Tou-Fou, who died disgraced, and who breathed out his grief in charming verses. He represents it under an allegorical form. The poet's sadness will be observed in the following lines :

THE ABANDONED.

'A woman radiant in beauty,
Scion of a noble race,
Has withdrawn to a mountain solitude,
Where she lives abandoned, amid the bushes,
Her sole companions.
One day, said she, a revolution
Broke out on the frontier of the empire:
My brothers were killed!
Alas, of what use are honours!
Even their bones were left unburied.
Everything has an end!
The deeds of a hero are like
The radiance of a flame
That a breath can extinguish.
My faithless husband has deserted me.
And his new wife is beautiful as jade.
He has no eyes but for that woman's smile;
He is deaf to my sighs!
Thus the limpid crystal of a spring
Creeps hidden from the side of a mountain.
The servant has gone to sell my pearls,
And returns to cover with thatch
The roof of my cottage. . . .
I gather flowers, but with them adorn not
My dark tresses.
With my own hands
I gather the sere-wood,
And to resist the cold,
Have but my thin sleeves;
While I rest against the bamboos
And wait,
My sad eyes fixed upon the setting sun!'

ON A VOYAGE.

'Near the bank dotted with plants,
Blown by the breeze,
Floats my solitary bark.

In the night its lofty mast alone
Casts its shadow.
The starry firmament opens up
An immense universe ;
The moon breaks into a thousand pieces,
Which sparkle and float with the waves.
I muse that renown
Is not based upon talent alone. . . .
Old age may cause disgrace ;
And now, wandering in the universe,
I am like a swan upon the waters.'

RETURN AND FAREWELL.

'The morning and evening stars
Never appear together :
Thus is it, they say, also with men.
What is then this evening
Which reunites us two
By the light of the lamps ?
How long has the time of youth lasted ?
Our hair is already white.
Our old friends, about whom we ask
Tidings, are, alas, all dead !
Who could foresee, twenty years ago,
That I should return to thy dwelling ?
I left thee unmarried . . .
And now thy children are many.
See them all with joyous air
Running to call me uncle,
And ask me whence I come !
During my gossip with thy family
The feast is already prepared ;
Thyself art gone to cut the vegetables
In the rainy night,
And thou hast made ready rice of the new harvest
Since it is so hard to meet,
Thou say'st we must empty ten cups . . .
But it is not to intoxicate me,

But to make me feel
The warmth of thy old friendship.
Alas, we shall again be separated to-morrow
By a host of mountains,
And the world will become immense !'

These little poems have not the ambitious flight of lyrical poetry, but they have preserved a certain form of simplicity only to be found in the works of antiquity. Our poesy is not made up of these little pieces alone: it possesses numerous poems in which dramatic interest is conjoined with brilliance of style and richness of colouring. As example, I will give a piece from the works of the poet Pe-Ku-Hi. Its title is 'Love':

LOVE.

'The Emperor Ming-Noang desired
The most perfect beauty of his empire.
But during many years
His search had remained fruitless.
Nevertheless, there existed in the family of Yong
A young girl of radiant beauty of nubile age,
But she lived with her parents and was unknown.
Beauty created by nature
Cannot remain unknown :
She was selected and brought to the Emperor.
A thousand graces were born of her smile ;
At Court the most famous beauty paled beside hers.
When, in the freshness of spring,
She bathed in the pond of Hoa-Tseing,
Her body seemed transparent ;
And when she issued from the tepid water,
She seemed to rise, like an ideal creature, without weight.
She was loaded with favours by the sovereign ;
Her hair floated like clouds ;

Her face had the brightness of flowers ;
Her footsteps had wings.
By her side the hours fled too swiftly.
Wherever the Emperor went, even on journeys,
She accompanied him : all was for her.
The Emperor built her a golden house
And pavilions of jade ;
Her brothers and sisters were ennobled,
Her family raised to honour.
From the highest tower of the pavilion
The harmony of her joyous music was heard,
Dancing and song
Charmed the Emperor's every moment.

* * * * * *

Suddenly the drums beat :
A revolt breaks out to interrupt these pleasures ;
The dust rises from afar beyond the towns ;
Chariots and horses hurry towards the South-East.
The imperial train has already journeyed
More than a hundred leagues ;
It is stopped :* all refuse to continue the march.

* * * * * *

The Emperor must submit to his favourite's death.
All her jewels are scattered on the ground ;
The sovereign, his joined hands before his eyes,
Wept tears of blood—
Present at that sad scene,
Unable to save her he loved.

* * * * * *

In the midst of the yellow dust
Raised by the furious blast
At length, by steep and winding paths,
They gain a resting-place.
At the foot of the mountain travellers are few :

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* The beauty of the favourite had inflamed the envious passion of a powerful neighbour. To prevent a war the Emperor was obliged to sacrifice his favourite.

The banners shine no longer under the pale sun ;
The blue water and green fields
Increase still more the Emperor's sadness ;
His heart is breaking in the soft moonlight ;
He starts convulsively.
At last the Emperor returns to his capital ;
Passing near the tomb
Where his beloved reposes,
And seeing no longer that figure so dear to his heart,
He stops, motionless.
And the sovereign and his servants
Look at each other, their eyes filled with tears !
At the palace the sight of relics,
Which have undergone no change,
Excites fresh grief :
The poppies, recalling the freshness of her hue,
And the willows, her eyelashes,
Cause tears to flow ;
Yellow leaves encumber the garden walks.
All the musicians seem aged,
The servants grown grey.
At night the fireflies flit
Around that desolation ;
And the lamps burn out
While the Emperor is still sleepless.
How long the nights are !
He counts the watches until the stars grow pale.
The hoar-frost covers the roofs,
His bed seems cold to him as stone.
Alas ! the separation is years old,
And never has the soul of the favourite
Returned to him in dream.

* * * * * *

A priest of Ling-Kung,
With power to communicate with spirits,
Has heard the Emperor is tormented with thoughts
Of love ; he offers himself to seek
The spirit of the favourite.

He traverses space ; he walks like the lightning
Upon the clouds ;
He rises to heaven ; he descends to the centre of the earth—
Nowhere in space does he find the favourite's spirit.
Suddenly he hears that on the sea exists
An ideal mountain peopled by the immortals.
In these transparent pavilions,
Raised among the clouds,
Are women of surpassing beauty.
Among them, one bears the favourite's name ;
Her face has the same radiance ;
Her body is of snow like hers.
Instantly he goes thither and knocks at the door of jade
West of the golden house,
And makes himself known. . . .
When the favourite hears in her slumber
That the Emperor's ambassador
Is asking for her,
She makes but one bound from her divine couch,
Dons in haste her vestments
And approaches through the curtains of pearls
Which open as she draws near.
Her tresses float like clouds ;
She looks still half asleep ;
The light breeze raises her wide sleeves,
Which recall the joyous dances of yore.
Tears run down over her charming grief-stricken face ;
She looks like the snowflower
Newly washed with rain.
With affectionate mien, her eyes fixed upon the messenger,
She asks for news of the Emperor,
And thanks him for thinking of her still.
She says that since the separation
Everything has seemed endless.
Favours and love were now no more ;
She was peaceful in the eternity of her rest.
Sometimes she bends down
To look towards the capital,
But sees only dust and fogs.

Then she gives the messenger,
To carry to the Emperor
In witness of her love,
A pin and bracelet of gold.
" If the heart of the mortal Emperor," she says,
" Is pure as that gold,
We may yet be re-united,
And the frontier between earth and sky vanish."
In the parting moment
She confides to the ambassador a secret vow,
And asks him to remind the Emperor of it :
Let him remember
That the seventh day of the seventh moon,
At midnight, during the silence,
They had vowed
To be transformed in heaven
Into birds flying always together,
And upon earth into two branches intertwined
Of the same tree.
And that they had said :
" Perhaps eternity will have an end,
But our love will have none." '

This poem is one of our most beautiful. The literary will be able to extract from the legend the delicate and profound sentiment which inspires it. They will recognise in this feeling the same passion pulsating in the heart of every heroine of love. The Emperor and his favourite loved as Romeo and Juliet, or Faust and Marguerite loved, and are worthy to enter Dante's Paradise in the dazzling light of immortality.

In the poems of Li-taï-Pe, I find a few pieces of a simple nature that I may also transcribe :

A NIGHT AT A FRIEND'S.

'This evening I descended
From the green mountain-top.
The moon was my companion on the path,
And when I turned me about,
To look whence I had come,
I saw but a sea of waving woods.
Thou hast taken me by the hand,
And led me to thy rustic home.
Thy children came to open the door,
When we had traversed the bamboo alley
Where climbing plants now and again
Held me by the cloak.
Oh, the charming welcome!
What delicious wine we drink!
We sing aloud
In harmony with the wind
Shaking the great trees,
Like the distant noise of waterfalls;
And when our songs are ended,
We notice that the stars
Begin to grow pale;
Then we both give way to slumber,
And we forget the Universe!'

By the same poet I quote the following little piece, as being of a description which has had many imitators. It expresses the thoughts of a woman whose husband is absent. It is a sketch, entitled

SPRING-TIME.

'The grass is green and soft
As silken threads.
The mulberry opens all its verdant buds.
This is the moment thou should'st be returning,
And my heart is wasted with sadness;
But Zephy, whom I know not,
Why does he come to my house?'

Here is another example of this description of piece :

'The light over the mountains
Grows dim by degrees in the west ;
And the moon rises quietly in the east.
I untie my hair :
I open wide my windows
To breathe the cool night air.
The soft breeze brings a sweet odour
Of water-lilies ;
And from the bamboo leaves I hear fall
The dew drop by drop.
I would take my instrument
To play music, but alas !
None can hear nor understand me.
This makes you
The object of my thoughts and dreams
Day and night !'

Descriptions have also tempted our poets; but this kind of poetry, to escape sameness and wearisomeness, must be perfect. There are many original pieces worthy of being known. I will only quote one whose equal I believe would be vainly sought in Western poesy. I give it as one of the masterpieces of this style :

THE GUITAR.

'On the banks of the river Tcheng-Yang
In the night, I accompanied a friend.
The trees and the reeds
Shaken by the winds of autumn
Murmur sadly.
I had dismounted from my horse and followed
My friend upon his bark ;
We wished to drink one last time

Before separating.
But without music we were not merry,
And only five minutes remained before parting.
The moon threw upon the stream
A melancholy light.
Suddenly we hear the sound of a guitar.
My friend and I forget the hour of departure ;
And, following the sound,
Seek to discover who plays.
We bring our bark to the shore : we call.
But the chords cease : the musician hesitates
To answer us.
Our invitation, however, is pressing ;
We renew it ; we dress again the table ;
The lamps are lighted.
At last we perceive a woman,
Her face half hidden by her guitar ;
She consents to enter our bark.
The first notes that vibrate,
As she tunes the chords,
Already express a sentiment :
Every sound is deadened but expressive,
As it were veiled by sadness.
Then she began to play.
The arpeggios trace curves upon the strings,
They come and go,
They rise and descend the octaves.
The major chords are like a shower,
The minor a whispering.
Suddenly the notes become brilliant ;
It is like a rain of pearls
Falling upon a dish of jade.
The scale is like a nightingale's song,
Or like the falling water of a cascade.
The rests express a sadness that freezes.
The end of the air is like the breaking of a vase
Whence the abundant water gushes ;
Or rather is like a charge of cavalry,
When arms and armour clash simultaneously.

In ceasing she passes the bow over the strings,
Which vibrate together,
Like the tearing of a woven stuff.
At this moment all the boats east and west
Are silent : we see but the light
Of the moon on the surface of the water.
She has finished : she has risen to salute her hosts.
She says she comes from the capital.
At thirteen years she learned to play the guitar.
And her name became the first
Among the artists :
Her pieces always charmed the auditors.
She excited the jealousy of all the women,
All the youth of the capital admired her.
Each of her pieces was paid
With priceless presents ;
Jewels filled her rooms ;
Upon her red skirts how many times
Wine was spilt !
The year passed in festivals ;
Spring and autumn slipped away
Unperceived by her.
Her brother joined the service, her mother died ;
Day by day her youth faded ;
Before her door carriages and horses
Became few in number,
And she resolved to marry
A merchant.
But he loves only money, this merchant,
And feels not the pain of separation.
He went a month ago to buy tea.
" Since his departure I keep the ship alone,
Around which the moon and water
Diffuse an icy coldness ;
And this evening, recalling my joyous youth,
So plenteously filled, I wept :
I played to distract my thoughts."
I had felt sympathy
When listening to the artist's music :

But after her narrative I could not repress a groan.
We all are the vagrants of the universe :
Do we need to know each other
Before meeting ?
I myself during the year since I left the capital
Live in sickness and exile
Where music is not heard.
All the year I have not heard a melodious sound.
My dwelling on the river-bank is marshy,
The yellow reeds and bamboos surround it.
Know you what I hear night and day ?
Wailing birds and yelling apes.
In spite of spring flowers and autumn moon,
Solitary always I fill the wine-cup.
True, I hear the song of the mountaineers,
And sound of rustic pipes ;
But this music deafens me
Without pleasing.
This evening, hearing your guitar,
I thought I heard
The song of the angels, and I was in ecstasy.
Play one more air, I pray you,
That I may write down this happy incident.
Touched by my prayer she played as she stood ;
Her song was sad ; all present
Were moved—for myself, I wept.'

This piece expresses an idea much in vogue in China ; it will doubtless have been remarked :

> 'We all are the vagrants of the universe :
> Do we need to know each other
> Before meeting ?'

A profoundly melancholy reflection proclaiming the principle of man's universal equality in sorrow. But what energy in the expression of that thought !

I leave with reluctance this rapid sketch of our

poetical works. I trust it may have given an idea of our national poesy; I shall think myself fortunate if these fragments have pleased.

EAST AND WEST.

MOST of the famous discoveries which have altered civilizations, and given birth to revolutions in ideas, have not emanated from the nations profiting by them.

It is certainly true that an idea once expressed belongs to humanity in general; still, a people may be proud of its inventions when they have marked the footsteps of progress.

The various applications of steam and electricity are wonderful discoveries to which all the nations of the West have contributed. There are, however, other inventions, not less valuable, proceeding often from very distant sources, impossible to trace to their origin.

Of such nature are the exact sciences, which no Western nation can boast of having created; such are the alphabetic characters which have served to delineate sounds; the fine arts, whose masterpieces date from remotest antiquity; modern languages themselves, whose roots are derived from a common origin, the Sanscrit; the properties of magnetism,

imported from the East, and the foundation of the navigator's art; and such, lastly, the various descriptions of literary composition, all of which, without a single exception, were created in the ancient world. Poetry, in all its forms of inspiration, from the epic to the idyl, tragedy and comedy, oratory, fable, all branches of metaphysics, legislation, policy and its numerous institutions, are so many varieties represented by masterpieces more than two thousand years older than the illustrious age of Louis XIV.

Western nations, six hundred years back at the most, were plunged in the darkness of ignorance. Many of them were not in existence, and some, now resplendent in their renown, were but insignificant Powers.

These remarks are interesting to make; they are especially interesting to a Chinese, who also has some title to throw his modicum of marvellous inventions into the universal balance where the services rendered to humanity are weighed.

If it be remembered how little intercourse we have had with other nations, it will be conceded that it is at least remarkable that we should know all that we do. It is generally agreed that, with the exception of astronomy and geography, all the sciences we possess are the result of our own investigations; and while there exists no other nation upon the globe able to attribute to itself the creation of a system of

civilization, to claim to have organized itself, and, in a word, to be original, we Chinese alone can justly make that glorious boast. We have imitated nobody. Chinese civilization exists only in China.

If, for example, our theatre is studied, it will be seen that it is original, like that of Greece.

I hope shortly to have time to publish the principal works of our stage, although learned men—among others Stanislas Julien—have already made known a few fragments. Their writings, however, are insufficient to form a criterion of the peculiar genius of our literary school, which excels in many styles, and would give ample matter for study to the Western world.

What I now wish to impress upon the reader is a fact of which I only understand the reason after studying literary Europe and its history—namely, that we Chinese are a world apart on the terrestrial universe, and that the only question for an inquiring mind is whether there has not existed between our East and the West a type of civilization extending its branches both ways; or rather, to use another comparison, has there not existed a source common to both races, springing, as it were, from a watershed between them, and fertilizing the opposite regions of East and West?

This hypothesis may be accepted; unless we suppose the various tribes composing the human race, dispersed after some great cataclysm, have gradually

raised themselves by continuous efforts, painfully amassing all the treasures of science, and thus, by an uninterrupted progressive movement, arriving at a stable and definite condition.

I can see only these two ways of guessing what our destiny has been: either human society, established in its respective regions, suddenly enlightened by revealed knowledge, and placed in possession of all the active powers of intelligence, or human society singly groping in uncertainty to seek the road to a favourable region where it might rest and prepare its future.

Such are the only two plausible suppositions, and I know not which to prefer. If it is true that actually acquired civilization has been the result of the incessant labour of the human race, how many ages must have elapsed anterior to the production of a song of Homer or a book of Confucius! How many existences have passed upon the earth before the earliest essays of civilization! How many sounds have been uttered before these regularly constructed languages were formed, these complicated grammars, these numerous forms of poesy and literature! The mind becomes giddy in the contemplation of the vastness of these labours!

If it be thus, why then this similarity of discoveries corresponding to identical wants? and why these marked differences in languages, that is in the expression of thought, which is man's gift? Certainly

one finds here and there traces of resemblance, but they are few and far between, and it seems as though some mysterious power had taken delight in entangling the clues which might have revealed the path travelled by the human race.

How great would be my satisfaction if by the study and comparison of our origins we could at last throw a light upon the far-off world of tradition, and re-constitute the genealogy of humanity! Will science never be able to address to man those noble words of peace, 'Ye are brethren'?

The civilization of the Western world is, if I may so express myself, a new edition, revised and corrected, of former civilizations. Ours has doubtless gone through many editions; but we now find it sufficiently corrected; and at all events we have no editor proposing to prepare a new one.

It seems as if the system of ceaseless amelioration according to the precept of the great writer Boileau, '*Vingt fois sur le métier remettez votre ouvrage*,' must be the more rational. We are accustomed to hear the reproach, 'Why do you remain stationary?' But if one is well off, or as well off as is possible, can one be sure, by altering the present, to obtain a better future? That is the question. 'Better,' they say, 'is the enemy of well,' and wisdom consists in limiting our desires.

I am not finding fault with modern civilization, which I think agreeable; but is the desire of novelty

a means of real progress? Are they on the right path who suppose that progress consists in change? That is a theoretical question which would have its advocates and adversaries, and of which I will not hazard the discussion. What I will at present confine myself to saying is that we were acquainted with gunpowder for many ages—they do us the honour of admitting we invented powder—but it is in this we differ with our Western brethren: we only used it to make fireworks; and but for circumstances making us acquainted with the West, we should not have applied it to firearms. It was the Jesuits who taught us to cast cannon. '*Ite, docete omnes gentes . . .*'

We claim also the priority of the invention of printing. It is no longer denied that the art of typography was known and applied in China in the tenth century. Would it then be very difficult to admit that the principle of that marvellous invention travelled Westward by the way of the Red Sea or Asia Minor? I do not think so. I will say as much of the properties of the magnet; all the erudite works which have been written on the subject—and they are numerous—establish the antiquity of that valuable discovery, and attribute it to us. It is stated the Arabs made use of the mariner's compass at the time of the Crusades, and that the knowledge was imparted to the Crusaders, who brought it back to Europe. In China the knowledge of the magnet

goes back to a remote antiquity. We find in a Chinese dictionary, written in the year 121 of the Christian era, this definition of the word 'lodestone': 'Stone with which a direction may be given to the needle;' and a century later our books explain the use of the compass.

These are questions of detail which have in themselves but a relative interest, but which warrant me in placing upon a firm basis the so much contested opinion that we are something better than simpletons when we refuse to admit the system of changes. Already we can count as ours, gunpowder, printing, the compass, and I might add silk and porcelain, which certainly are magnificent inventions of our industry, and would suffice to rank us among civilized nations.

It must then be concluded that if in the order of eminently useful discoveries we have obtained a distinguished position, we may also have applied the same practical spirit to our laws and institutions, and obtained sufficiently good results not to wish to change them for the sake of seeing what might come of it.

There incontestably exists, then, a human civilization whose monuments date from a period when the Western world had as yet no being—a civilization contemporary with the famous dynasties of Egypt and the patriarchs of Chaldæa, which was founded in the earliest ages of humanity, and has not altered

for more than a thousand years. Such is the historical fact.

Our relations with the peoples upon our frontiers have left no traces in their history. Arrian speaks for the first time of the Chinese as people who exported raw and manufactured silk, which was brought Westward by way of Bactria. That is the only piece of rather ancient information—but modern to us—mentioning our existence to the Romans, the masters of the world. It seems conclusively proved that the Romans had no intercourse with our empire. Our history only mentions a Chinese embassy which was sent, under the Han dynasty, 94 B.C., with the object of opening up intercourse with the Western world. This embassy reached Arabia, and brought thence a custom which was doubtless much appreciated, as it was immediately adopted—that of eunuchs. I believe this is the only allusion our history makes to intercourse between China and foreign nations.

However, if the inhabitants of the Celestial empire have never quitted the limits of their territory to undertake travels in the distant Western lands, or if at least the memory of them has not been preserved in history, there is one incontestable fact, namely, that foreign populations came to domicile themselves among us, and that even now there are descendants of these ancient wandering tribes.

Among them are Jews who emigrated to China

200 B.C., under the Han dynasty; that is, in one of the most flourishing epochs of the empire.

It was a Jesuit who in the eighteenth century made the discovery of that Jewish colony; and the narrative he has written upon the subject deserves to be recorded:

'As to those who are here called Thiao-Kiu-Kiao (the sect that tears out the sinews), I wished to visit them under the idea they were Jews, and in the hope of finding the Old Testament among them. I made overtures of friendship to them, to which they immediately replied. They had even the civility to come and see me. I paid them a visit in the Li-paï-Ssé, which is their synagogue, and where they were assembled. There I had long interviews with them.

'I examined their inscriptions, some of which are in Chinese, and others in their own tongue. They showed me their religious books, and allowed me to enter the most secret part of their temple, even that from which the vulgar are excluded. There is a place reserved for the head of the synagogue, who never enters it but with profound respect.

'They told me their ancestors had come from a kingdom in the West called the kingdom of Judah, conquered by Joshua, after he had left Egypt, passed the Red Sea, and traversed the desert; and that the Jews who emigrated from Egypt numbered six hundred thousand. They assured me their alphabet possessed thirty-seven letters, but that they usually

employed only twenty-two of them; which agrees with the testimony of St. Jerome, stating that the Hebrew language has twenty-two letters, two of which are double.

'When they read the Bible in their synagogue they cover their faces with a transparent veil, in memory of Moses, who descended from the mountain with his face veiled in this manner when he gave his people the Decalogue. They read a section every Sabbath day. The Jews of China, therefore, like those of Europe, read the Law in the course of one year.

'They discoursed in a very absurd manner of Paradise and Hell. When I spoke to them of the Messiah promised in the Scriptures, they seemed much surprised at my words; and when I informed them that His name was Jesus, they replied that the Bible mentioned a holy man named Jesus, the son of Sirach, but that they had not heard of the Jesus I spoke of.'

Here, then, is an authentic tradition two thousand years old! It is only in the Jewish people one finds such attachment to nationality!

Take any people you please: at the end of four or five generations they will be completely naturalized—the Jews never! They remain the same wherever they go, attached to their religion, their nature, their customs; and this permanence of a particular race in the midst of a people numbering four hundred

millions, is not an unimportant fact from the point of view of general history.

It is certain that in the confusion following the great invasions, many tribes, the remains of ancient peoples, came to seek asylum in our peaceful regions. If local religious practices and certain customs were studied, and minute observations of character pursued, doubtless light might be thrown upon facts interesting to the archæologist.

The date of the introduction of Christianity among us has not been precisely recorded. All nations, however, appear to have been evangelized by the Apostles in the earliest Christian ages. The Jesuits have stated that Christianity was preached in China in the sixth century by Nestorian bishops; but this fact is not very certain. The same may be said of the opinion relative to the visit of St. Thomas to our country. There was certainly at a very early period a Christian mission in China; for we cannot attribute to accident alone the identity of certain Buddhist ceremonies with the worship of the Catholic Church. However this may be, Christian churches existed at Nankin in the thirteenth century, and the fact is mentioned in the narratives of the celebrated Venetian traveller, Marco Polo.

It was in the eighth century the cloud covering the Chinese world was dispersed. This is the age of the intercourse between the empire and the Arabians,

and from this period really dates our historical birth into the world.

The accounts written of the sojourn of the Arabians in our lands, accounts written by themselves, and which have been translated, bear witness of the prosperity of our empire, and compel the admission that China possessed a brilliant civilization just a thousand years ago.

It is natural to suppose the Arabians learned our arts, and appropriated our discoveries; which finally arrived in Western lands, where they were perfected.

That, at least, is an opinion I imagine I have clearly demonstrated.

THE ARSENAL OF FOO-CHOO.

I HAVE mentioned in the course of this essay upon our civilization, that China had frequently shown her desire to be initiated into European arts and enterprises. I have shown that the genius of our institutions encouraged us to practise useful arts, and that the only effort of foreigners should be first directed to showing the value of their novel methods and mechanical discoveries.

I did not consider I was arrogating an excessive privilege in Western eyes by claiming for my countrymen the incontestable right of choice.

The Jesuits, whose admirable skill in obtaining results I have no need to extol, had perfectly understood our character, and had it depended upon them alone, great services might have been rendered to the cause of universal civilization. They knew that all progress is by its very nature slow, and that it is the result of continual labour, instead of the violent fruit of conquest. They have therefore left great recollections in China, and I am not ashamed to recognise the fact.

Many years have passed away since the day when license to teach was given to the Jesuits—in China; a long century has passed over the Western world, borne on the wings of tempest, uprooting dynasties and beliefs, upsetting institutions, raising new thrones, and founding amid clash of arms and thunder of cannon contemporary civilization, which seems to have arrived at its apogee without being able to assure the reign of peace.

One of the most brilliant results of that great tornado has been the opening of numerous outlets of international commerce, the development of which has been truly marvellous. All nations have practised barter, and competed to establish the superiority of their productions. Universal Exhibitions have recompensed these efforts, and among the nations of the world which have thronged to the various European capitals, the Empire of the Centre has held a distinguished place.

I need not here recall the political circumstances preceding the definitive establishment of social intercourse between China and the Western nations. I have neither the right nor the wish. I have already mentioned that in China, well-bred people never in conversation discuss political questions, and this book has no pretension to be aught but gossip in reply to questions which have been so often asked me.

Neither have I the intention of stating my opinion upon the various characters of the foreigners who live in our seaports, and who for the most part covet a great extension of influence. All of them import into their intercourse the particular genius of their race in its most exaggerated form. We are unable to endow them with the character which would be pleasing to us, and can only hope they may help us to make mutual relations durable and easy.

There are some, however, among these foreigners who have placed their knowledge or practical skill at the service of China, and whose efforts have been crowned with success. The patience they have displayed in their beneficent task, and the tact of which they have given proof in their first attempts at innovation, have been the victorious agents of their enterprise. They have to complain neither of a systematic opposition of the Chinese to their efforts, nor of the ill-will of our functionaries. This opposition and ill-will have not usually been excited without cause; it is enough to state that those who have

succeeded have neither excited them nor complained of them.

Their works are standing: arsenals have been founded in many of our towns and ports; mines have been opened; a network of telegraphic lines binds the various provinces of the empire to the capital; steamers flying the Chinese flag carry on commerce along our coasts and the courses of our rivers. These are results honouring those who have contributed to produce them; and if they are not yet so complete as they should be, they testify at least that a step has been made in the path of industrial enterprise. Books of science also, translated into Chinese, are becoming common among our people, who will no longer fear the fiery horse when it makes its appearance in the country.

Among the foreigners who have opened a furrow for the good seed, M. Prosper Giquel, whose name is often mentioned in France in connection with Chinese affairs, occupies a distinguished position; and in this sketch of the influence exercised by young Europe upon our ancient empire, the establishment he has created occurs naturally to my mind, I mean the arsenal of Foo-Choo. That work has in truth been a great success, and if I mention it here, it is less to pay homage to the professional ability and energy of those who created and directed it, than to the administrative measures taken with a perfect knowledge of Chinese character, thanks to

which a numerous staff of Europeans and Asiatics have been able to live in harmony. The regulations producing this result may serve as a model every time foreigners are commissioned by our Government or our countrymen to found an establishment.

It is not, enough, however, as one might be tempted to believe, to be animated by good intentions to be successful in China. There, as everywhere else, the proverb applies, 'Heaven helps those who help themselves;' and the career of M. Giquel in our empire would furnish the best proof of its accuracy, were such necessary.

At his arrival in China M. Giquel was a naval officer. In the first part of his sojourn he learned the Mandarin language, and familiarized himself with our manners and institutions. In the years 1862-4 he took an important part in the suppression of the Taiping rebellion, organizing and commanding, with several of his naval and military comrades, a Franco-Chinese corps in the Province of Tche-kiang. It was thus he won both his first steps in the Chinese hierarchy, and the powerful protections which later indicated him to the Emperor's choice for the creation of the arsenal of Foo-Choo. Recompenses endorsed by universal opinion have since raised him to dignities in China only conferred upon officers of the highest rank.

An arsenal is, in the exact sense of the word, a factory or depôt of arms or warlike engines; but the

establishment of Foo-Choo manufactures neither gunpowder, rifles, nor cannon. It is essentially a collection of workshops and factories devoted to naval constructions, having for its object not only to produce ships of war, but to make profitable use of the metallic wealth of China. By the schools attached to the works, and the instruction given by European professors, the Arsenal is also a practical school.

The pupils it has trained, several of whom have finished their education in Europe, are already skilful engineers, ready to take the superintendence of several branches of industry now established or projected.

The commencement of the works took place in 1867. I was too young then to appreciate the difficulties of such an enterprise, and my memory would be unable to give the exact measure of the efforts they have necessitated. My readers will thank me for here quoting a passage from the learned memoir addressed by the Director of the Arsenal to the Society of Civil Engineers at Paris :

'At the beginning of the year 1867 some preparatory work was put in hand, such as the accommodation of the staff and stores; but it was hardly before the month of October of the same year, on my return from France, where I had been to obtain labour and materials, that the works, properly called those of the Arsenal, received their real impulse. I shall

never forget the painful feeling I experienced when I found myself set down opposite a naked paddy-field, upon which workshops were to be built. Of the machinery purchased in France nothing had yet arrived, and we found ourselves at a seaport possessing no resources in the shape of European tools or machinery. However, we had to get to work.

'A little square hut, the only construction we found on the land, and one whose use I am unable to mention to you, served us for a smithy; we immediately built two furnaces, worked by a Chinese bellows, and made our first nails.

'With the assistance of native carpenters, we constructed pile-drivers, and proceeded to erect a workshop.

'During this time the earthworks were vigorously carried on by the aid of twelve hundred men, for we had to raise our site 1·80 m. to put it above the level of high floods; and as it was necessary to soothe the natural impatience of the Chinese, who required to see results in the shortest possible period, we undertook the construction of a series of wooden workshops, in which a portion of our machinery was placed as it arrived from France. These improvised workshops still exist, and the Arsenal presents an appearance common enough in new establishments created abroad, of buildings erected in haste, by the side of permanent constructions, built with a veritable plethora of material and labour.'

All travellers who have been to Foo-Choo, and have left a record of their travels, are unanimous in their praises of the Arsenal.

The results have exceeded expectation. But what has not been sufficiently praised, and is here of great value, is the good administration of that establishment, the order and harmony which have never ceased to reign between Europeans and Chinese. The latter had the administration of the Arsenal, and regulated its discipline under the surveillance of a committee composed of the high dignitaries of the empire; the Europeans alone assumed the direction of the works and instruction.

It was thanks to this system the little French colony at the Arsenal always found difficulties removed from their path, and that all could congratulate themselves upon the energy displayed in the superintendence and the progress realized by the instruction.

'I believe our country,' says M. Giquel, in the same memoir I before quoted, 'may draw some advantage from that establishment; the direction of the works being entirely French, the Chinese officers are enabled to appreciate our system of work and methods of manufacture. The shops were organized with machinery from France, and the Arsenal keeps up continual intercourse with French industry. The industrial training given to

the pupils and apprentices being also French, they will naturally turn their eyes towards France when the progress realized in China makes them long to break out of the narrow circle in which they are now restrained.'

These words, inspired by an elevated patriotism free from barren ambition, may be quoted without hesitation by a Chinese.

Who among us is not ready to applaud this noble language, animated by genuine patriotism, a patriotism which offers its native land the homage of every toil patiently borne, every effort realized, and which salutes the future as a hope and a source of good? Institutions like those of the Arsenal of Foo-Choo are great, because they create civilizing emulations, and prepare the triumph of those generous ideas which alone can make nations more united. It is from such ideas alone that progress can proceed.

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SHEWS the great number of predictions, sacred and other, of this event, their real meaning, the manner of their fulfilment, and the nature of the new era now beginning.

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Canada's Poet: By "Yours alway, James Gay" (Of the Royal City of Guelph, Ontario), Poet Laureate of Canada, and Master of all Poets. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. "As amusing as English as She is Spoke." [One Shilling.

THE *Saturday Review* has treated "Canada's Poet" as the "thinnest" joke of the generation. But the fact is this amusing book is not a joke at all. The whole point of its publication is, that like "English as She is Spoke," it is a serious book, seriously written, and its author, James Gay, is serious in believing himself to be on a level with Lord Tennyson, to whom it will be observed his "poems" are affectionately dedicated.

My Ladye and Others: Poems: Satirical, Philosophical, and Arcadian: By J. W. GILBART-SMITH, B.A., Christ Church, Oxon. Second Edition. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. [Ten-and-Sixpence.

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IN this volume, which is the continuation of "John Bull and his Island," Max O'Rell describes, in his happiest vein of wit and humour, the domestic side of English women, London beauties, shop girls, actresses, women's rights, hallelujah lasses, and so forth.

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DESCRIBES, with corroborative documents from sovereigns, statesmen, and the press, nearly half a century of the wholly gratuitous toil of a true lover of England, to whom a Lord Chancellor said, "No one has worked more consistently and efficiently, and with more self-sacrifice than yourself," and of whom Richard Cobden wrote, "You have deserved well of all to whom Humanity is dear."

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Bartolozzi and his Works. (Dedicated by permission to Her Majesty the Queen), Biographical, Anecdotal and Descriptive. By Andrew W. Tuer. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. *For illustrated edition of Bartolozzi and his Works, see* "Illustrated." [Six Shillings.

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THE truth respecting China and the Chinese, according to a Chinaman who considers he may be allowed to know as much about his country and its people as the more or less veracious travellers who have discoursed thereon. The subject is full of interest, and Colonel Tcheng-ki-tong's book is destined to dispel many time-honoured prejudices.

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The True Story of Mazeppa: The Son of

PETER THE GREAT: A CHANGE OF REIGN. By Viscount E. MELCHIOR DE VOGUE. Translated from the French by JAMES MILLINGTON.
LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. [Six Shillings.

FEW are unacquainted with the mythical Mazeppa of Voltaire, Byron, Hugo, and Poushkin. Fact, however, is stranger than fiction, and the weird and fascinating story herein related of the hero, who is every year solemnly cursed in Russian churches —with the exception of those founded by himself—will possess an equal interest for the lover of the romantic and the historical.

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John Oldcastle's Guide for Literary Begin-

NERS. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. [One Shilling.

THE title is self-explanatory, and the nature of the book will best be gathered by a perusal of the chapter headings:— "Literary Amateurs," "Introductions to Editors," "How to Begin," "Declined with Thanks," "Pounds, Shillings, and Pence," "Journalism as a Career," (1. The fair side; 2. The seamy side), "In an Editor's Chair," "A Miscellaneous Chapter," "Ten Journalistic Commandments," "How to Correct Proofs." To the literary tyro "Oldcastle's Guide for Literary Beginners" is full of most useful hints, while to the outside world it wil afford a fund of amusement.

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An Essay of Scarabs: By W. J. Loftie, B.A.,

F.S.A. (Author of "A History of London") together with a Catalogue of Ancient Egyptian Amulets of various kinds, bearing the names of Kings. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. [Twenty-one Shillings.

CONTAINS an account of the use of the *Scarabeus*, or beetle, as an amulet by the ancient Egyptians, to whom the animal and its image in stone or pottery were significant of the resurrection. To the essay is appended the illustrated catalogue of an extensive and valuable collection of these curious objects bearing the names of Egyptian kings, and standing to history in the same relation as a collection of coins. One hundred and twenty (numbered) copies only have been printed, of which only a small number remain unsold.

"A quaint little volume."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

Ye Oldest Diarie of Englysshe Travell: Being

the hitherto unpublished narrative of the pilgrimage of Sir Richard Torkington to Jerusalem in 1517. Edited by W. J. LOFTIE, B.A., F.S.A. Author of "A History of London," &c., &c. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. [One Shilling.

THE amusement to be derived from reading these ancient travels, and guessing at the curiously misspelt names is almost endless. After the title was chosen and printed it was found that a nearly contemporary diary, that of Guylforde, had already been circulated by a literary society; but, as Torkington went over nearly the same ground only a few years later, and as his narrative is much more personal, and more amusing and quaintly told it has not been thought necessary to make any alteration.

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"Of great value and interest."

A Guide to the River Thames, from its source

to Wandsworth, together with particulars of the rivers Avon, Severn, and Wye, &c. Illustrated. By JOHN SALTER. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C.; OXFORD: John Salter, University Boat-house. [One Shilling.

THE contents of this dependable guide are sufficiently explained in the title, and the position of the author, who is intimately acquainted with every inch of the Thames on which a boat can be pulled, is a sufficient guarantee of accuracy.

"A most thoughtfully considered and valuable treatise."

Socialism of To-day. By Emile de Laveleye.

Translated from the French by GODDARD H. ORPEN. Including "Socialism in England," by the Translator. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. [Six Shillings.

SOCIALISM *v.* INDIVIDUALISM is rapidly becoming the most pressing, as it is the most momentous, question of the day. An English version of M. de Laveleye's account and criticism of European Socialism is therefore a welcome contribution to the subject. It embraces a lucid statement of the views of Marx and Lassalle, the founders of German socialism, and a graphic description of the wild theories of Bakunin, the apostle of Nihilism. Mr. Orpen has largely added to the importance of the work by giving the first comprehensive account ever published of socialism in England. He accurately describes and carefully criticises the three socialistic movements conducted by the Land Nationalisers, the Christian Socialists, and the thorough-going Social Democratic Federation, respectively. The book appears opportunely at a time when all Europe is astounded at the electoral victories of the Social Democrats in Germany.

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EXPLAINS a system, novel and yet not new, by which the bulkiest person may, without derangement, distress, or inconvenience, be reduced in bulk and restored to the conditions of health and activity. The Editor of *Truth* refers all his fat correspondents to this little *brochure*. "Fined down?—why, he's now as thin and strong as one of those spider bicycles you see about, and he goes as well, too!"

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History of the Decline and Fall of the British Empire. By Edwarda Gibbon, M.A., F.R.S.L., &c. [Auckland, A.D. 2884.] LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. [Sixpence.

A CLEVER satire in the style of Gibbon on the Liberal Government and present system of army organisation.

"Nothing could be simpler, or in better taste."—*Saturday Review.*

The Marriage Ring, or, The Mysteriousness and Duties of Marriage: By Dr. Jeremy Taylor, with an Introduction by the Rev. J. A. Kerr. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. ['Two-and-Sixpence.

A REPERTORY of quaint humour, varied learning, sound theology, practical common sense, advice on the choice of a husband or wife, the duties of the marriage state, the government of the household, and the religious bringing up of children.

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Thought-Reading, or Modern Mysteries Explained: Being Chapters on Thought-Reading, Occultism, Mesmerism, &c., forming a Key to the Psychological Puzzles of the Day. By Douglas Blackburn. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. [One Shilling.

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A COLLECTION of essays, letters, anecdotes, and verses, serious, comic, and serio-comic, by various hands, about tennis and lawn-tennis, with the rules of the latter game. Useful information and critical remarks are mixed with much genuinely amusing matter.

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Henry Irving, Actor and Manager: A Critical Study.

By WILLIAM ARCHER. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. Second Edition. [One Shilling.

AN attempt at a dispassionate and rational appreciation of the distinguished actor's merits and defects. Shunning "Irving-mania" and "Irving-phobia" alike, the author seeks to moderate the transports of indiscriminating worshippers, while at the same time combatting the prejudice of bigoted unbelievers. Neither a lampoon nor a panegyric, but in short a "critical study."

"May be cordially commended."—*Liverpool Daily Post.*

Are we to Read BACKWARDS? or What

is the Best Print for the Eyes? By JAMES MILLINGTON. With an Introduction by R. BRUDENELL CARTER, F.R.C.S. (Illustrated.) LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. [One Shilling.

IN a little compass the author has gathered together much valuable information on the eyesight, and he points out the injurious effects of premature and excessive literary work, and suggests such modifications of paper and print as will enable the greatest amount of work to be done with the least possible fatigue to the eyes. The introduction by R. Brudenell Carter is most interesting and suggestive.

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from *The Times* on the present condition and future prospects of China. By A. R. COLQUHOUN, Assoc. Mem. Inst. C.E., F.R.G.S., Author of "Across Chrysê," etc., Special Correspondent of *The Times* in China. With an Introduction by S. H. LOUTTIT. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. [One Shilling.

AN exhaustive account of the present condition of China, and suggesting means for the opening of that Empire to European commerce.

LORD BEACONSFIELD ON THE CONSTITUTION.

"What is he?" and "A Vindication of the English Constitution."

By "Disraeli the Younger." [The Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G.] Edited with an anecdotical preface by FRANCIS HITCHMAN, author of "The Public Life of the Earl of Beaconsfield," &c. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. [Two-and-Sixpence.

THE only vindicator of the "lost leader" of the Tories that is necessary. A reprint of the famous and long lost pamphlet "What is he?" of which it is believed that only one copy is in existence, and of the almost equally scarce "Vindication of the Constitution," which Disraeli the Younger addressed to Lord Lyndhurst in 1835. The former establishes the identity of Disraeli's politics in youth and in age, and the latter vindicates the consistency of the two great men with whose names it is associated against the calumnies of Lord Campbell. Mr. Hitchman's preface contains a great number of highly interesting and hitherto unpublished facts concerning the Disraeli family.

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Ethics of Some Modern Novels: By Trevor

CREIGHTON. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. [One Shilling.

A BRIEF review of the morals of some of the more notable novels of the day, in which the author plainly says that vice is too apt to be surrounded by a halo of sentimentalism, and that the line is not clearly marked between right and wrong.

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Dickens Memento (with Introductions by

FRANCIS PHILLIMORE and JOHN F. DEXTER.) Catalogue, with purchasers' names and prices realised, of the pictures, drawings, and objects of art of the late Charles Dickens, dispersed at Christie, Manson & Woods in 1870. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C.

A BEAUTIFULLY printed and luxuriously got-up book of special value to the Dickens collector. In three separate divisions, the text includes primarily a reprint of the catalogue of the Dickens sale, at which it may be remembered almost fabulous sums were realised. Mr. Francis Phillimore contributes a gossipy and interesting introduction, and Mr. John F. Dexter a lengthy, learned, and exhaustive paper on book rarities, subtitled "Hints to Dickens Collectors."

Bewick Memento (with an Introduction by

ROBERT ROBINSON). Catalogue, with purchasers' names and prices realised, of the scarce and curious collection of silver plate, prints, pictures, wood blocks, copperplates, and Bewick relics, &c., dispersed at Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1884. Illustrated. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C.

A BEAUTIFULLY printed and luxuriously got-up book of special value to the Bewick collector. Mr. Robert Robinson, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who contributes the introduction, has been connected during the greater part of a long lifetime with the Bewick family, and he writes with a full knowledge of his subject. Of the eighteen beautiful illustrations, printed on separate leaves, twelve embellished the original catalogue, but the six additional at the end, including the humorously treated frontispiece of "Cows Angling"—all charming specimens of Bewick's skill with the graver—are first impressions from blocks hitherto not printed from.

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Glass in the Old World: By M. A. Wallace-

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A MOST comprehensive and entertaining epitome of what is known about glass in ancient times and in all countries. A treasury of information full of interest and anecdote.

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A BOOK of travels, both practical and amusing, giving the experiences and impressions of two men of the world during their visits to Oporto, Lisbon, Pernambuco, Rio de Janiero, the mining districts in the interior of Brazil, and the River Plate. Fluent, unaffected, and full of observation.

"Full of important information."—*Pictorial World.*

The Truth about Tonquin: Being The Times

Special Correspondence. By ARCHIBALD R. COLQUHOUN, F.R.G.S., &c., Author of "Across Chrysê," &c. LONDON: Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C. [One Shilling.

THESE letters should be studied by those who wish to understand the position of affairs in China as regards the Tonquin difficulty.

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